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FIRST TRUTHS.

FROM THE FRENCH OF

Claude

PERE

A B U F F I E R.

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FROM THE FRENCH OF

PIERRE B. U. F. E. R.



FIRST TRUTHS,

AND THE

ORIGIN OF OUR OPINIONS,

EXPLAINED:

WITH

AN ENQUIRY

Into the Sentiments of

MODERN PHILOSOPHERS,

Relative to our primary Ideas of Things.

TRANSLATED FROM

The FRENCH of Pere BUFFIER.

TO WHICH IS PREFIXED

A Detection of the Plagiarism, Concealment, and Ingratitude of the Doctors REID, BEATTIE, and OSWALD.

Render unto Caesar the Things which are Caesar's.

L O N D O N:

Printed for J. JOHNSON, N^o. 72, St. Paul's Church-Yard.

M, DCC, LXXX.

FIRST TRUTHS,

AND THE

ORIGIN OF OUR OPINIONS,

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Relative to our present Ideas of



The French

TO WHICH IS PREFIXED

A Dissertation of the Philosophy, Consequences, and In-
fluences of the Doctrines of HUME, BAYLE, and
OSWALD.

1829

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M.DCC.LXXX.

P R E F A C E.

THAT human affairs are subject to a variety of revolutions, is an observation as long acknowledged, and as well founded, as any in the records of Literature; and this hath naturally arisen from the progression of sublunary transactions, and the inequality of those individuals who have conducted them. But that Philosophy, at once the parent and progeny of Truth, according to the general acceptation of the word, should have been the subject of eternal changing, would seem extraordinary and unnatural, were it not evinced by that fate which hath invariably attended every system that has hitherto appeared.

Truth hath been the ostensible object of pursuit by all of the numerous sects that have existed amongst mankind. Each hath professed to be animated by no other motive, and to seek no other end; and all have asserted their attainment of it respecting themselves, although at the same time
b they

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they have denied it to all others. The doctrines of *Aristotle* and his followers, for ages, were received and propagated, as truths irrefragable, by the learned and philosophic, through all the schools of *Europe*. *Des Cartes* arose, and laid the foundation of a new system, in which he was followed by *Malbranche* in *France*. *Hobbes*, in his Treatises on Human Nature, and on Man, and *Locke*, in his Essay on the Human Understanding, the latter of whom was greatly and unconfessedly indebted to the former, extended the regions of this new philosophy, when *Aristotle* and his disciples seemed to be driven from the field, and truth was then supposed to be firmly established. At length a Man, the greatness and excentricity of whose genius exceeded that of the preceding sages, came forth, and attacked the systems of all his predecessors in philosophic researches: he even attempted to annihilate the very existence of matter, and to reduce all those objects that had been hitherto considered as substantial beings, to mere ideas; every thing external was proscribed, and all nature crowded within the brain of every individual.

At length the fallacy, at least the imperfection, of these systems of modern philosophy, began to be descried; and amongst those who have discovered the fallibility of them, no man has so signally and so justly distinguished himself as Father

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ther *Buffier*, a character well known and greatly esteemed, among the learned Jesuits, for a variety of literary productions. Of these, his First Principles of Truth deservedly obtained the place of pre-eminence. It was his opinion, that not only the ancient, but even the modern philosophers above-named, have involved the subject of their enquiries in such abstruseness and difficulties, as demand too much reflexion to be understood by men of ordinary capacities. For this reason, he has endeavoured “to know truths in
“their very source; to analyse those to which we
“must ascend, in order to ascertain whatever
“is necessary to be proved, and which constitute
“the utmost boundary of human enquiry; to de-
“duce principles capable of dispelling the mist of
“vulgar prejudice, the perplexities of the schools,
“and the prepossessions even of certain learned
“and modish philosophers;” and to found the primary truths on Common Sense, of which the subsequent is the definition. “Common sense
“is that quality or disposition which nature has
“placed in all men, or evidently in the far
“greater number of them, in order to enable
“them all, when they have arrived at the age
“and use of reason, to form a common and
“uniform judgement, with respect to objects
“different from the internal sentiment of their

“own perception, and which judgement is not
“the consequence of any interior principle.”

From the preceding definition, it is evident that this learned writer considers Common Sense, not like those senses of seeing, hearing, tasting, smelling, and touching, which perceive their objects by intuitive discernment; but as a quality or disposition of the mind, resulting from age and time, by which men experimentally arrive at the use of reason, and from meditation attain an ability of forming a common and uniform judgement, with respect to objects that are different from the internal sentiment, which evinces that they themselves exist, and that “these first
“truths are propositions so clear and obvious,
“that they can neither be proved nor refuted
“by other propositions,” because there are none to be adduced which are more perspicuous.

That this explanation coincides with the ideas of this celebrated writer, respecting common sense, is manifest from the examples he adduces, to signify his meaning: such as, “there is something in other beings that is called truth, wisdom, prudence; and this something is not
“merely arbitrary.” The discovery of these attributes, as existing in other men, is impossible to take place in the mind of any being which does not reflect on the sentiments, emotions, and actions of others; compare them with those of himself,

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himself, examine the nature of the things themselves, and thence infer that they are the consequence of thinking justly, and acting rightly, which constitute the nature of truth, wisdom, and prudence, in the proceedings of mankind. Every example he brings, clearly evinces that those first truths, which are the objects of common sense, require experience and meditation to be conceived; and that the judgements thence derived are the result of exercising reason. In fact, what he understands by common sense and its perceptions, are evidently the same with that of common understanding, and its powers of discerning and of judging, which is given to almost all mankind; in contradistinction to that superior degree of reason, which is supposed to exist in such alone as exert it in the contemplation of objects abstruse, metaphysical, or remote from the general comprehension of mankind; and to that degree of imbecillity which precludes the capacity of examining things with due consideration. To this common sense, or common understanding, he appeals through all his treatise; and in all the instances which he adduces, he appears to have fairly and fully receded to such principles of truth as may deservedly be considered as primary, and which are adequate to all the purposes of that conviction which he derives from them,

them, and within the reach of such common intellects.

That the productions of men eminent in learning and science, were intended for the instruction of subsequent writers, who might bend their minds to the study of similar subjects, is what cannot be well called in question; and therefore those who succeed the former have a just right to the use of those discoveries which the preceding have produced, provided always they gratefully acknowledge from what source they have derived or improved their publications. But to come forth as authors, on the merits of other men, and to conceal the obligation, is not only a flagitious theft, and an injury to the dead, but an insult also on the understandings of the living.

Of later years the *Transtweedian* regions have swarmed with a new species of men, different from their itinerant pedlars in the wares they sell, but similar in the manner of packing them together from the labours of others: these are Writers, or rather Book-makers, "who obtain but "a mediocrity of knowledge between learning "and ignorance;" for such is the opinion of an author, whose abilities to judge, and whose candour in decision, deservedly place him above the suspicion of being inadequate or unjust in the sentence he has pronounced.

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Notwithstanding this first truth, and that genius is not a flower which blossoms in that hyperborean country, they are nevertheless as ambitious of literary distinction—as self-sufficient, arrogant, and contemptuous, as if learning and superior intellect were given to them alone—and as ungrateful as if their productions were unstolen, and of their own creation. They persevere in collecting materials from other authors, and, industrious to conceal their plagiarisms, compile and assume them as their own. By the ambition of being ranked among the learned of *Europe*, they are urged to search after subjects on which to employ their pens; by their self-sufficiency they are prompted to deem themselves equal to the most arduous undertakings in literature, and from thence their arrogance arises—By the mediocrity of their talents and acquirements, they are incapacitated from penetrating to the genuine conceptions of the authors which they read: at the same time being conversant, in their own country only, with men of less, or not of greater, intellects and learning than themselves, they are not encountered by those checks which result from the conversation of such men of superior powers and attainments as are to be found in the more enlightened regions of *Europe*; whilst the affectation of refining on the discoveries and sentiments of other writers, runs them

either into puerilities and absurdities, and into distinctions which afford no difference; or they form an envelope of words, which contains no precision nor arrangement of ideas, and effectually evinces, to those who will study them with attention, that they neither understand the authors they have quoted, nor themselves.

From an union of all these circumstances, they are naturally contemptuous, because they are ignorant of that which has been long known by men who are truly learned.

The author which I have translated will afford a signal example of the preceding truths; for, among the Scottish writers, there are those who in different degrees have clandestinely taken the principles and opinions of *Pere Buffier*, converted them to their own purposes of acquiring fame, and concealed the theft by ungratefully unacknowledging the person to whom they are obliged; and have spoiled, as far as they had abilities, his philosophy, either by not understanding what it contains, or by affecting a definition of common sense equally distant from that of this learned writer, and from truth itself.

Of these, *Dr. Reid*, Professor of Moral Philosophy in the University of *Glasgow*, is the foremost; for the title of his publication is, *An Enquiry into the Human Mind, on the Principles of Common Sense*. Like *Pere Buffier*, he has attempted

attempted to shew the fallacies of *Des Cartes*, *Malbranche*, *Locke*, and *Berkley*, as philosophers: to these he has added *David Hume*, whom he has connected with *Berkley*, and says, “the present age, he apprehends, has not produced two more acute or more practised in this part of philosophy”; and then, in the subsequent page, as a proof of this acuteness in *Hume*, he proceeds upon the same principles with *Berkley*, and carries them to their full length. He stole his principles from the Bishop then, without acknowledgement. But it seems, “as the Bishop undid the whole material world, this author, upon the same grounds, undoes the world of spirits, and leaves nothing in nature but ideas and impressions, without any subject on which they may be impressed.” He must be an acute and well-practised philosopher indeed, who has undone the world of spirits, and supposed the existence of ideas *without a mind to contain them*, and left *impressions to be made upon nothing at all*: but being a Scotchman, like *Dr. Reid*, according to the Scottish doctrine of national partiality, though erroneous and unintelligible, he is still to be deemed acute and well-practised in philosophy; and thus the Professor, fancying that he has evinced the fallacy of *Hume*, has gratified the two strongest passions in the bosoms of the *Transtweedian* writers; the vanity which spontaneously

neously springs from their native self-sufficiency, and visionary refinements on authors whom they do not understand, together with that uniform prevalence proceeding from national partiality.

Hume is indeed a Metaphysician of such subtilty, at least, that his *own* conceptions appear to have escaped the intelligence of himself. I have frequently analysed a multiplicity of his sentences, paragraphs, and pages: I have assiduously endeavoured to affix the properest idea to each word, and to consider the whole in all the points of view within my power; and yet without a possibility of comprehending his intention. Diffident of my own abilities, I have consulted men of distinguished eminence in metaphysical learning: these also have united in the previous conclusions. Of this fact I can adduce innumerable instances, that through his *Essays*, together with his usual unintelligibility, he has not only been guilty of introducing opinions which have no other tendency than that of levelling all distinction between virtue and vice, and of exterminating that supreme felicity which necessarily results from the exercise of religion and morality; but that he abounds with more flagrant self-contradictions than can be found in any writer whom I have read: for such is the truth, that men not only acquire reputation in metaphysical literature by the very means which would inevitably preclude it in
all

all others, but they are more secure from the detection of that criticism which is generally within the reach of common understandings.

Metaphysical researches in their nature include a difficulty of being comprehended: the readers, therefore, of such productions, whenever they encounter a passage unintelligible in itself, are inclined to suppose it to have sprung from the abstruseness of the matter, and kindly impute to an insufficiency in themselves, the want of comprehending that which the author himself had never conceived with any degree of ideal precision, nor expressed with intelligible perspicuity; and thus the latter acquires the reputation of being extremely refined, and deep in the knowledge of his subject, and beyond his reader's reach of thought, when, in fact, he was only truly incomprehensible, and not to be fathomed either by himself or even the most extensive line of the human intellect.

Dr. Reid, in his Enquiry, has carefully avoided literally transcribing the passages relative to *Des Cartes*, *Malbranche*, *Locke*, and *Berkley*, and the observations on them, which are to be found in *Buffier*; but he has with no less care adopted his sense, and modestly assumed it as his own. He has considered the writings and philosophy of that great man as *treasure trouvé*, and abstained from

from delivering it to the person to whom it lawfully belongs.

In like manner, although he has told us in his title-page, that his enquiry is founded on the principles of common sense, yet has he in no part of it condescended to tell us in what these principles itself, and even common sense, consist; and whoever will attentively consider his work, and compare it with that of Pere *Buffier*, will certainly find that *Reid* has the greatest obligations to the learned Jesuit; that he has exerted much art in concealing what he has stolen, and afforded no satisfactory, or even any explanation of his ideas, concerning the principles of common sense. If his conception of common sense be any where to be found, it seems most probably to be in the subsequent passage, pag. 208 and 209.

“ The sensations of touching, of seeing, and
“ hearing, are all in the mind, and can have no
“ existence but when they are perceived. How
“ do they all constantly and invariably suggest
“ the conception and belief of external objects,
“ which exist whether they are perceived or not?
“ No philosopher can give any other answer to
“ this, but that such is the constitution of our
“ nature. How do we know that the object of
“ feeling is at the finger’s end, and no where else;
“ that the object of sight is in such a direction
“ from the eye, and no other, but may be at any
“ distance;

“ distance ; that the object of hearing may be at
 “ any distance, and in any direction ? Not by
 “ custom, surely ; not by reasoning, or comparing
 “ ideas ; but by the constitution of our nature, &c.”
 What passage can well appear to be more destitute
 of common sense than the preceding, which is
 included in an enquiry said to be founded on the
 principles of common sense ? For, according to
 this writer, it seems that reasoning, and compar-
 ing ideas, form *no part* of the constitution of our
 nature : and yet it is impracticable to assign any
 other causes, that the objects of touch, eye-sight,
 hearing, &c. have any distinction of place, or dif-
 ference in distance, perceiveable by these senses,
 but by the custom of reasoning upon, and com-
 paring those degrees of force, from the slightest to
 the most powerful, in the respective objects of
 each sense. For, do we not know that an object
 is touched by the fingers *alone*, because, by com-
 paring its affecting those, and no other parts of
 the body, we discern it is felt by them alone ?
 By the custom of hearing all degrees of sound,
 from the least to the greatest ; of beholding ob-
 jects, from the slightest degrees of visible percep-
 tion to the strongest ; and, from the custom of
 comparing the differences which arise in them
 to the eye and ear, as we either approach or re-
 ceede from each, we obtain the idea of distance :
 and, by reasoning upon them, do we not acquire
 the

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the knowledge of deciding at what distances they respectively are? Is not the idea of space, in fact, obtained by the powers of loco-motion habitually exercised? For, were a man to remain with all his senses immoveable in the same place, from his birth to this minute, could he possibly acquire that idea? For, without the *custom* of moving over the surface of the earth, without reasoning, and comparing the objects as they varied to the senses, by proximity or recess, neither the eye, ear, fingers, nose, nor palate, could have conveyed an idea of distance to the mind.

But what explanation of the preceding circumstances, respecting the senses and their objects, can there be imparted by saying the latter are perceived, because "such is the constitution of "our nature?" What does it imply more, than that, being constituted men by nature, we see, hear, smell, taste, and touch, as men? Words which are absolutely inexplanatory of any means or effects. And what is the denying that the knowledge of direction and distance are not attained either by custom, reasoning, or comparing our ideas, so well known, and so demonstratively ascertained, less than an egregious ignorance of the subject on which he presumes to treat? In fact, the preceding enquiry affords us a just and conspicuous exhibition of the *Scottish* manner of philosophising; and the passage on which

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which it has been animadverted, is a fair specimen of all that is truly their own, of those Northern Book-makers. Whatever is to be found of genuine merit, real learning, and superior intellect, in their literary manufactures, is generally purloined and unacknowledged. Words which envelope a confusion of ideas, or that are unimparting any form, the sole part that can be fairly attributed to them. Notwithstanding this, the kindness of inadequate readers, which supposes them too profound for their capacities; when, in fact, they are truly unintelligible by themselves and all others, together with that national combination to extol the productions of their countrymen, however deficient, and to depreciate those of all others, however meritorious, have fallaciously forced too many of their publications into some degree of estimation; among which that of Dr. *Reid* may be justly considered.

The next, in order, of the three writers who are indebted to Pere *Buffier* for all that is contained of common sense in their productions, is Dr. *Oswald*, in his Appeal to Common Sense in behalf of Religion. Dr. *Reid* has made free with *Buffier* by taking his sense only, by conveying it in other terms than those of a regular translation, and by concealing the person whom he has plundered; but *Oswald* has not only adopted the sense of the French author, but rendered his ideas in a mere

mere translation, and given them as his own, without acknowledging the obligation. In like manner, although he treats of First Truths, through his whole Appeal, in the sentiments of *Buffier*, in order to conceal the writer to whom he is obliged, he has not only given a title inexpressive of the idea of those first truths; but, by an unpardonable act of injustice to *Buffier*, of dishonour to himself, and of insult on his readers, he has given a passage from *Mr. Locke*, as it is adduced and answered by the learned *Frenchman*, and even quoted the latter as the author of it, under the title, *Remarks on Locke's Essay, by F. Buffier*; whereas no such essay ever had existence. The passage alluded to is contained in the treatise which I have translated; and the world cannot produce a more signal act of consciousness in theft, than his thus adducing a quotation from a work that never had a being, and changing the title of that on which he hath committed this literary felony, in order to escape the ignominy of detection. It resembles the cunning of the Welshman, who having stolen a cow, in order to avoid the discovery, should she be seen by the right owner at the place of sale, cut off her tail, and tied on another of a different colour; but the artifice was discovered, and the felon brought to condign punishment.

Like

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Like *Reid*; *Oswald* has composed his Appeal by attempting to pull down the edifices of *Des Cartes*, *Locke*, *Berkley*, *Bolingbroke*, *Hume*, and others; at least to demolish them in some particular parts; and then to erect a fabric of his own, with the materials pirated from *Buffier*, and other authors, composed without order or architecture. In fact, his production is manifestly a compilation of transcripts from a common-place book, incongruous and desultory; like Harlequin's jacket, made of scraps of various colours, sewed together to form a garment, which does not cover the nakedness of the maker. It ought to be acknowledged, that Dr. *Reid* is by much the least culpable of the two, and in various places hath given proofs of his ability to think for himself, although there appear but few passages which merit the distinction of originality.

Oswald, by what can be gathered from his Appeal to Common Sense, either did not understand, or has intentionally rejected, the idea of it which Father *Buffier* has adopted. The learned Jesuit considers common sense to be that judgement, which the generality of mankind are capable of obtaining by age, and the use of reason. Now it is beyond dispute, that the use of reason is reasoning; and that judgement is the conclusion which is drawn by men who exercise their reason. Common sense, then, is that degree of understanding

derstanding in all things, to which the generality of mankind are capable of attaining by the exertion of their rational faculty.

Oswald hath chosen "to found the belief of "primary truths upon the authority of that simple perception and judgement of the rational "mind, which *Mr. Locke* had overlooked in "framing his hypothesis." The judgement of a rational mind, upon simple perceptions, must inevitably be the conclusions of reasoning on those simple perceptions; or the term *rational* conveys no idea, and the perceptions and judgements on them must be the same thing, although the second is necessarily a mental operation on the first: this judgement, therefore, is an act of reasoning; and this is what *Mr. Locke* agrees in.

Pere Buffier has made his common sense, as it has been already observed, to be that degree of intelligence which men in general attain by age, and the use of reason; which is evidently this, that by time we arrive at the knowledge of an infinitude of things; and, by the use of reason, form our judgements on them: and that those judgements are then justly to be considered as *first truths*. The instances which are adduced, by the learned Jesuit, evince that this is his idea of common sense. "This maxim, says he, that "men ought to be faithful and just, is held by "all men." Now it is certain, that the ideas of
faith-

faithfulness and justice can by no means be attained but by the exercise of reason on the actions of men, and the relations in which they stand respecting one another. By what means can faithfulness be known, before there has been either breach of trust, or of duty; or justice be conceived, before acts of violation and injury have been committed? And do not the ideas of faithfulness and justice spring from comparing the conduct of mankind, respecting those rights which they obtain from nature, and from thence inferring, by ratiocination, that difference in things which constitutes faithfulness and treachery, justice and injustice? Hence does it not evidently appear, according to *Buffier*, that, by reasoning on what we perceive, we arrive at such *first truths*, as are attainable by that degree of understanding, which is common to mankind who use their reason?

Oswald seems to conceive common sense to be a faculty distinct from reason, and not that degree of it which men of common capacities, by the exercise of reasoning, may easily acquire; and that the truth or reality of its objects are as *intuitively* discerned as those of colour, sound, flavour, hardness, odour, by the respective senses of which they are the objects; for, in page 71, he says: "In truth, if we have no original ideas
" of religion and virtue, and all our knowledge

“of this kind must be gathered from abstractions, made by ourselves, such knowledge must needs be precarious.” But are not our ideas of virtue acquired by the same means of reasoning on our perceptions and actions, as those of faithfulness and justice, and consist of abstractions drawn from our observations on the conduct of individuals, and thence forming a complex idea of virtue absolutely detached from all particulars and personalities, and then acquiesced in, as truths, by that degree of understanding which the learned Jesuit distinguishes by the appellation of Common sense? And, although we are possessed of original ideas of religion, in consequence of the operation and energy of its doctrines and tenets, by the immediate perception of the faculty of faith, yet certainly no such ideas are attainable by common sense, without the exertion of reason: for the objects of faith are no more the objects of *common sense*, than they are of the *sense* of seeing.

Again, page 191, he says: “Along with the perception of hard, smooth, hot, cold, which we have by the sense of feeling, we get, and cannot avoid, the idea of something which is hot, cold, rough, or smooth; which something, being no object of sense, does not enter into the minds of idiots, and the lower animals.”

That men in their senses should conceive, that with the perceptions of hard, smooth, hot, cold,

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cold, we should get the idea of something that is hot, cold, rough, or smooth, is certainly true, because these perceptions and ideas are one and the same: but that the ideas of cold, hot, rough, or smooth, should be something different from the perception of them, which is no object of sense, seems incapable of entrance into the mind of any but an idiot, or an inferior animal. The mind, indeed, in all these instances, from a multiplicity of experience on feeling objects possessed of the preceding properties, does, by abstraction, form an idea of hot, cold, hard, smooth, &c. independent of any specific object; but this is not an immediate perception by a faculty denominated Common sense, but one arising from the reflection of reason.

Again, he says, page 192, "By the external organ of sight we have the same perception of bodies in motion, which idiots, and the lower animals have; but, by the intellectual sight, we apprehend motion itself, which idiots and the lower animals do not. Six billiard-balls being placed in a line, we see not only the impulse given to the first, and the motion performed by the last; but we clearly perceive the communication of motion from the first to the last, and see, in a manner, motion run through the whole." Now I would gladly know whether the impulse and communication of all this motion

motion are not ideas perceived by the organs of bodily sight, absolutely without the interference of an *intellectual sight*: or whether motion can be possibly conceived by any other means than by the organs of sense? All that can be intellectually obtained concerning the perceptions of motion, is an abstract idea of motion, derived from the perception of all degrees and modes of motion. Is it not therefore clear, from the preceding passages, that this Writer has been talking of that to which he has affixed no precision of idea; and, if he be deemed a deep philosopher in the opinion of others, that it is because he is unintelligible to himself?

In page 194, Dr. Oswald tells us, "there are
"two orders or classes of perception: those, to
"wit, we have in common with other animals,
"and which we shall call *animal perceptions*; and
"those peculiar to the rational kind, which shall
"be called *rational perceptions*." From the subsequent, and innumerable passages, it appears that, by the animal perceptions, he means those which are acquired by the senses of seeing, tasting, smelling, &c. and by *rational perceptions*, "things conveyed to the mind, by the help of
"sensible objects, and which result from a due
"attention to them; but, not being themselves
"the objects of sense, they do not fall within the
"sphere of idiots and lower animals, are objects
"only

" only of the rational mind ; and therefore the
" ideas we have of them are fitly called *rational*
" *perceptions*."

To the preceding he adds : " One cannot have
" the idea of motion without once and again
" attending to bodies in motion ; nor can you
" have an idea of self-determination, without be-
" ing well acquainted with the motions performed
" by animals ; nor of the essential difference be-
" tween virtue and vice, without understanding
" and entering into the views and motives of the
" agent." All these, and a multiplicity of other
instances which he has adduced, incontrovertibly
prove that these *rational perceptions* are neither
different, nor any thing more than those ideas
obtained by the use of reason, and that judgement
which is derived from it by age ; and whatever
this Writer may assert, there is no distinction in
them, either real, important, or worthy the at-
tention of any one of those who look into the
human mind. From every instance it is evident,
that every perception, which he denominates real
to common sense, is nothing but that which all
mankind have hitherto conceived to be the re-
sult of reasoning on the objects which are offered
to the mind, and conclusions thence derived,
which are within the reach of the generality of
men who shall exert the energy of a common
understanding. In fact, this Writer seems to
have

have imagined that new names, applied to old ideas, bequeath a new manner of thinking; although he has not added a perception to the list which has been known for ages, nor a new mode of thinking to that which has been long exercised; at the same time it is evident, that his instances are either self-contradictory, or inconsistent with his notion of common sense; that he errs egregiously, if he supposes that he has held out new lights and new truths to mankind; and is unpardonable in his endeavours to conceal the name of that Author to whom he is so signally obliged for all that approaches to the merit of common sense.

Having thus examined, in a succinct and cursory manner, what has been advanced by *Reid* and *Oswald*, on the preceding subject, and sufficiently shewn their plagiarisms from *Pere Buffier*, and their ingratitude in concealing their obligations to him; I now proceed to *Dr. Beattie's Essay on the Nature and Immutability of Truth, in Opposition to Sophistry and Scepticism*.

This *Transtweedian* Writer has, in like manner, pillaged from the treasures of the learned Jesuit all that contains the least degree of merit through his whole production; and he has only mentioned his name, in a note, among those who have written on the subject of common sense. It has been already evinced, that the idea of *Pere Buffier*, respecting common sense, is—that it is that degree

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of judgement, which by time, and the use of reason, is attainable by the generality of mankind; or, which is precisely the same, that degree of reason which is common to those who may exert it on the various subjects that are brought before the mind.

But *Beattie*, willing to refine on what he reads, or not perfectly understanding it, has made reason one faculty of the mind, and common sense another; and inculcated, that the truth of all the objects of the latter is as intuitively discerned by his common sense, as that of the objects of the corporeal senses, the eye, ear, palate, nose, and fingers, which are respectively adapted to the perception of them.

In imitation of his countrymen, *Reid* and *Oswald*, he also has examined, after *Pere Buffier*, what has been advanced by *Des Cartes*, *Malbranche*, *Locke*, *Berkley*, and *Hume*; and indeed with justice exposed the absurdities of *Le bon David*, as he was ironically styled by *John James Rousseau*, who, if he had discerned the necessity of an established religion to confirm and perfect the civil institutes of legislatures, as clearly as he saw the rights of human kind, and what ought to be the chief objects of all legislation, had been the most eminent of all authors that the world hath hitherto produced: for no man did ever perceive the truths of those opinions which he has

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published, with more perspicuity, or delivered them with greater precision; nor did any other ever express them with more propriety and force, or manifest a greater degree of genius, and of original thinking. In fact, he is so conspicuously superior to *Voltaire*, *D'Alembert*, and all those who have attacked his works, that it is evidently manifest, their enmity to him arose from a consciousness of his superiority to them, and from the despicable envy of not being capable of bearing and confessing his pre-eminence.

But let me return to *Beattie*, who asserts, Chap. II. "that all reasoning terminates in first principles; all evidence ultimately intuitive; common sense the standard of truth to man."—And this intuitive evidence he applies to mathematical reasoning—to the evidence of external sense—to the evidence of internal sense or consciousness—to the evidence of memory—to reasoning from the effect to the cause—to probable and experimental reasoning—to analogical reasoning—to faith in testimony.

In order to elucidate this matter with the greater accuracy, let me first define what is uniformly understood by intuition: and this is, *immediate knowledge*, or *knowledge not obtained by deduction of reasoning, but instantaneously accompanying the ideas which are its objects*; such as the knowledge of colour by the eye, of sound by the ear,

ear, of taste, odour, and softness, by the other senses.

Let me now enquire, whether the truth of the objects of Common Sense, in all the preceding instances, be perceived in this instantaneous and intuitive manner, without any previous operation of the mind to effect it. It will be then discovered, whether this Plagiary hath understood the Author whom he hath so ungenerously plundered, or the idea which accompanies the terms *intuitive evidence* in the minds of all such as have just conceptions of it.

In order to evince this truth, let us examine a few of those propositions which he has given as proofs that common sense *intuitively* perceives the truth of all the objects of the human faculties: and to this end, Dr. Beattie having asserted, "that all reasoning terminates in first principles, "all evidence is ultimately intuitive, common sense the standard of truth to man," proposes, Chap. II. to treat of truth on the following heads.—1. Of mathematical reasoning.—2. Of the evidence of external sense.—3. Of the evidence of internal sense, or consciousness.—4. Of the evidence of memory.—5. Of reasoning from the effect to the cause.—6. Of probable, or experimental reasoning.—7. Of analogical reasoning.—8. Of faith in testimony.—Such being

ing the subjects of his essay, before I shall proceed to them particularly, it seems necessary to animadvert a little on the title of this Chapter I. "That all reasoning *terminates* in first principles." Then must it be impossible to reason otherwise than *à posteriori*, from the effect to the cause; which is contradicted by every moment's experience: the mathematician reasons from his point, line, and surface; the mechanician, from elasticity, weight, forms, and proportions, in the constructing of machines; the farmer, that, the sun rising to-morrow at six o'clock, he shall have light to proceed to his work; that his scythe, hook, and other instruments of husbandry, being well sharpened, will effect what is intended to be done by them: in fact, in all possible instances, whether they be scientific, or in the usage of common life, men reason from the cause to the effect, from the principle to its consequences; or experience and discoveries have effected nothing amongst men, respecting their conduct, in all the vast variety of knowledge and invention. This, I believe, will be far from being acknowledged by persons of common sense; and may it not be as justly asserted, that men always walk backwards, and do not see to what place they are going, as that they reason backwards to principles which they are to discover?

Before

P R E F A C E. xxix

Before we proceed to a more intimate examination of this matter, I request my reader to remark that definition of intuitive evidence which hath been given in the preceding page but one.

But *Beatie* asserts, pag. 58, "every step in a mathematical proof is self-evident, or must have been formerly demonstrated; and every demonstration doth finally resolve itself into intuitive or self-evident principle, which it is impossible to prove, and equally impossible to disbelieve." Hence, according to this writer, that which is acquired by reasoning, step by step, until it arrives at demonstration, is intuitive, self-evident, or knowledge not obtained by deduction of reasoning, but instantaneously accompanying the ideas which are its objects; and those demonstrations which are formed by drawing inferences from the relations in which they are situated respecting each other, resolve themselves into intuitive or self-evident principles, or into immediate knowledge instantaneously accompanying the ideas which are its objects. If this be admitted, then there is no difference between the perceptions which are received by the external senses, and those which are the effects of logical deduction, or the exercise of reason. This then is, to confound all those terms and distinctions which have hitherto been universally acknowledged

ledged to be essentially different, and to make that end which is discovered by investigation and long deductions of ratiocination, to be as immediately known as that which is seen by the eye, and instantaneously perceived.

The last article of the Chapter above mentioned is, that "Common Sense is the standard of truth to man:" and now it seems necessary to shew his idea of Common Sense, pag. 39. "The term *Common Sense* hath, in modern times, "been used by philosophers, both *French* and "*British*, to signify that power of the mind which "perceives truth, or commands belief, not by "progressive argumentation, but by an instantane- "ous, instinctive, and irresistible impulse, derived neither from education, nor from habit, but "from nature; acting independently on our will, "whenever its object is presented according to an "established law, and therefore not improperly "called *sense*; and acting in a similar manner "upon all, or at least, upon a great majority of "mankind, and therefore properly called *common sense*. It is in this sense and signification that "that the term *common sense* is used in the present "enquiry."

Again, he says, page 42. "Reason, as implying a faculty not marked by any other name, "is used by those who are most accurate in distinguishing, to signify that power of the mind by "which

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“ which we draw inferences, or by which we are
 “ convinced that a relation belongs to two ideas,
 “ on account of our having found, that those ideas
 “ bear certain relations to other ideas. In a word,
 “ it is that faculty which enables us, from rela-
 “ tions and ideas that are known, to investigate
 “ such as are unknown, and without which we ne-
 “ ver could proceed in the discovery of truth a
 “ single step beyond first principles, or intuitive
 “ actions: and it is in this last sense we are to
 “ use the word *reason* in the course of this en-
 “ quiry.

Such are his distinctions between common sense
 and reason: and page 47, he adds, “ There are
 “ few faculties, either of our mind or body, more
 “ improveable by culture, than that of reasoning;
 “ whereas common sense, like other instincts, ar-
 “ rives at maturity with almost no care of ours.
 “ To teach the art of reasoning, or rather of wran-
 “ gling, is easy; but it is impossible to teach com-
 “ mon sense to one who wants it.”

I must once more beg leave to insert the idea of
 Pere Buffier respecting common sense, page 22:
 “ What is here meant by common sense, is that
 “ disposition or quality, which nature has placed
 “ in all men, or evidently in the far greater num-
 “ ber of them, in order to enable them all, when
 “ they have arrived to the age and use of reason,
 “ to form a common and uniform judgement with
 “ respect

"respect to objects different from the internal
 "sentiment of their own perception, and which
 "judgement is not the consequence of any anterior
 "principle." I shall now examine the instances
 which *Beattie* has adduced of the different modes of
 reasoning already related: it will then be seen,
 whether these instances are more applicable to
 reason than to common sense, as he has delivered
 them; and whether his definition, or that of *Pere*
Buffier, correspond most accurately with that idea
 which is generally conceived to belong to the
 term *common sense*, in the instances which *Bea-*
tie has afforded. Page 57, he tells us, "There
 "are two kinds of mathematical demonstra-
 "tion: the first is called *direct*, and takes
 "place when a conclusion is inferred from pre-
 "misses which render it necessarily true; the other
 "kind is called *indirect*, &c. with which I have
 "nothing to do in this place." Such being his definition of mathematical de-
 monstration that it is a conclusion arising from
 inferences drawn from premises, which make it
 necessarily true, that is, by the operations of reason
 successively exerted; it seems not a little surpris-
 ing, that such truths should be perceived by *com-*
mon sense, as he has described it, "a power of the
 "mind which perceives truth, not by progressive
 "argumentation, but by an instantaneous, in-
 "stinctive, and infallible impulse." If the pre-
 ceding

ceeding mode of inference from premises to a conclusion necessarily true, be that of mathematical reasoning, the truth which is thence discerned can in no sense be said to be derived from an instantaneous, instinctive, and irresistible impulse, without progressive argumentation. Either mathematical reasoning is, therefore, not that which he describes; or, being comprehended by inferring from premises to a conclusion, it cannot be the object of *Beattie's* common sense. But, in fact, his description of mathematical reasoning is true, and his definition of common sense erroneous: for such is the reality, that truth arising from mathematical reasoning is discovered by the very operations of reason, which he describes, "that power of the human mind by which we draw inferences, or by which we are convinced that a relation belongs to two ideas, on account of our having found that these ideas bear certain relations to other ideas."

Hence it is evident, that truth, in mathematical reasoning, is the result of reason, proceeding from principles or premises by inference and induction, till it arrives at demonstration; and not of the intuitive discernment of his *common sense*, which, he asserts, is a different faculty from reason, and arrives, "like other instincts, at maturity, with almost no care of ours."

d

However,

However, although the truths resulting from mathematical reasoning cannot possibly be the effect of the instantaneous and instinctive perception of *Beatie's* common sense, it coincides exactly with that of *Pere Buffier*: "a quality which nature hath placed in men, in order to enable them, when they have arrived at the age and use of reason, to form a common and uniform judgment with respect to objects, &c."

Now this common sense being acquired by age, cannot arrive to maturity, like instincts, with almost no care of ours; and being attained by the use of reason, that is, by inferring successively from principles and premises to a conclusive truth, cannot be a common sense that discerns instantaneously and instinctively. In the preceding manner *Beatie*, by presuming to refine on the ideas respecting common sense, as described by *Pere Buffier*, and by adopting another which is his own, hath deviated into a palpable absurdity. But let me proceed to his exemplifications, that mathematical truths are instantaneously perceived. Page 59, he says: "but who will pretend to prove that a whole is greater than a part, or that things equal to one and the same thing are equal to one another?" Certainly there are many who will pretend to prove the preceding axioms; and this, because without proof they had never been comprehended.

Whole

Whole and *part*, *great* and *small*, are abstract ideas, derived from material substances which have been the objects of the external sense of seeing: the eye hath seen the whole mass; it hath seen it divided into parts; it hath thereby acquired the ideas of greater and less, by an operation of the mind called comparison, between two or more things: and from thence reason hath inferred that the mass, which contained the several parts, is necessarily greater than any of those parts of which the whole was composed; and in this manner, the antecedent axiom hath been proved to be true by one man to another, or by the same man reasoning in the preceding way. When the above axiom therefore is offered to the mind of any person who hath previously discerned the truth of it, by the preceding inference, it is not instantaneously discerned by *Beatie's* common sense, but by an instantaneous remembrance that it is absolutely true.

Such being the case in this simple axiom, it is yet more evident in the subsequent, "That things equal to one and the same thing, are equal to one another:" for, in order to comprehend this truth, the senses must have learned to distinguish things by numeration, as one, two, &c. and thence to form abstract ideas of numbers. Equality is an idea obtained by the senses also, by comparing

paring two or more objects, relative to size, colour, shape, and other properties of bodies, and thereby discerning their agreement or disagreement; and from thence the idea of absolute equality is derived. It being discerned then, that two or more things correspond exactly with a third, it is logically inferred, that each of the former, being equal to the third, must of necessity be equal to one another. When this axiom, therefore, is, on future occasions, proposed to the mind, it is, as in the former case, by an act of reminiscence, and not of sense, either *common* or otherwise, that the truth is instantaneously perceived. As to the propriety of *instinctive*, as applied to common sense, it shall be animadverted on hereafter.

There is yet another mathematical truth, which this writer presumes to be instantaneously perceived: "the three angles of a triangle are equal to two right angles." Whoever has made the least observation on the manner in which this proposition is demonstrated in Euclid, will instantly be convinced, that the truth of it is neither instantaneously, nor intuitively discerned: for, in order to evince this truth, not only a diagram, but a long series of induction is inevitably requisite: so that, instead of this truth being intuitively discerned by all men, it really happens, that by far the greater part of mankind are incapable of

of exerting that application and research which are necessary to the discerning of it.

I shall now examine what he has offered on the "evidence of external sense." To believe our senses, says he, page 64, "is therefore according to the law of nature; and we are prompted to this belief, not by reason, but by instinct, or common sense. I am as certain that I am at present in a house, and not in the open air,—that I see by the light of the sun, and not by the light of a candle,—that I feel the ground hard under my feet, and that I lean against a real, material table, as I can be of any geometrical axiom, or of any demonstrated conclusion."

How it should come to pass that men are not prompted to believe their senses, as much by reason as *Beattie's* common sense, seems difficult to ascertain, though it be easily asserted. Nay, to me it seems, that it is reason alone, or common sense, as described by *Buffier*, which induces us to believe our senses; for, having found by manifold experience, that our senses are the faithful reporters of the objects which are placed before them, we thence infer that they ought to be believed. But in what manner *Beattie's* common sense, which "perceives truth, or commands belief, not by progressive argumentation, but by an instantaneous, instinctive, and irresistible impulse,"

can afford a ground for believing our senses, seems to be utterly inexplicable.

Is it not somewhat extraordinary that common sense and instinct should be the same faculty? Instinct is defined, by as competent a judge of our language as any this kingdom hath produced, and shewn to be used in that sense, by authors of great eminence, to be desire, or aversion, acting on the mind, without the intervention of reason, or deliberation, or the power that determines the will of brutes. Now, that a man, by such desire or aversion, should be as certain that he is in a house, and not in the open air,—that he sees by the light of the sun, and not by the light of a candle—that he feels the ground hard under his feet, and that he leans against a real material table, as he can be of the truth of any geometrical axiom, seems to be inconceivable: for, in what manner instinct, which is an emotion of the mind, either towards or from the object before it, can be susceptible of discerning truths, and synonymous with a common sense, which instantaneously perceives the truth of things, appears to want much explanation to be comprehended. And if instinct and common sense be the same power, then brutes are possessed of *Beattie's* common sense; against which I have nothing to object. Sir *John Falstaff* indeed asserts, he knew the true prince by instinct: but that a man should know that he was leaning on a table

table by instinct, was left for the discovery of Dr. Baatie. In fact, the certainty of all the preceding particulars arises intuitively from the evidence of the external senses of seeing and feeling, and is neither the object of instinct, common sense, nor belief: and from the whole of the antecedent passage it is manifest, that either this writer hath annexed no precise idea to the word *instinct*, or that he has used *instinctively* as synonymous with *intuitively*, through ignorance of the language in which he writes.

I shall now enquire whether the objects of internal sense or consciousness be intuitively or instinctively perceived: and of these, *I exist*, is a proposition, which he says, page 33, "he is conscious " his mind readily admits, and acquiesces in." But in what manner does this consciousness arise from common sense, when, in fact, this consciousness is nothing more than a reflection, that he thinks, and therefore that he is something, or an existence? By applying this mode of examination through all the instances adduced in his whole chapter, it will be seen that nothing therein is instantaneously perceived; but that all are the effects of inference and reasoning in greater or less degrees.

Proceed we now to examine what he has said on the evidence of memory. "We trust," says he, "to the evidence of memory, because we cannot " help trusting to it. The same providence that
"endued

“endued us with memory, without any care of
 “ours,” as if man had been concerned in making
 himself, “endued us also with an instinctive pro-
 “pensity to believe in it, previously to all rea-
 “soning and experience.” It seems to be not per-
 “fectly easy to comprehend whether, by “believ-
 “ing in memory,” he means that we remember
 we believe, we remember; which no man will
 doubt: or that, “by believing in memory,” we
 believe all we remember, which is certainly not
 the case; for all men remember innumerable
 things which they do not believe. But what con-
 nection is there to be found between remembrance
 of things which are past, and the instantaneous
 perception of truth as soon as objects are offered
 to a faculty, which this writer has determined
 to be common sense? And if Providence, as he
 says, “has endued us with an instinctive propen-
 “sity to believe in what we remember, previously
 “to all reasoning and experience,” this gift of
 Providence would not appear to be the most eli-
 gible, since whosoever shall, by the influence of
 this propensity, be induced to believe without rea-
 soning and experience, must inevitably be led into
 endless error: and therefore, as instinct in all ani-
 mals is an infallible guide to their well-being, I
 am apt to conclude, that this propensity to believe
 in memory, previous to all reasoning and expe-
 rience,

rience, is not instinctive, nor the gift of Providence.

I shall now proceed to his chapter of *reasoning from the effect to the cause*. This he begins, page 110, with the story of a book gotten into his chamber, no body can tell how: "for, if his servants report be true, and if the book has not been brought by an invisible agent, it must have come in a miraculous manner, by the interposition of some invisible cause; for still he must repeat, that without some cause, it *could not possibly have come* hither:" which case is stated on *ifs* that never can happen. And then he boldly pronounces it to be an axiom clear, certain, and undeniable, that whatever beginneth to exist, proceedeth from some cause: whether this maxim be intuitive or demonstrable, may perhaps admit of some dispute." And perhaps not: the very title of the chapter being of reasoning from the effect to the cause; that is, from a thing known, to a thing sought for; it is past dispute, that the latter cannot be instantaneously discerned, without progressive argumentation. As an instance of this truth, let us take what he has placed among the propositions in his first chapter, "There is a God:" and then let us shew in what manner the truth of this proposition is evinced. Whoever has seen an artist employed in making a watch, or other curious machine, and has observed

served the effects which result from the application of elastic or heavy bodies on wheels of certain proportions, and divisions of teeth, is convinced, from that which passes in his own mind, whenever he hath executed any thing with his own hands, that this artist was guided in all his operations by the direction of thought. Whenever therefore this person may, on future occasions, behold a mechanical composition, he readily infers, that it must have been the production of a thinking being, or of man.

In like manner, when the order and beauty of the universe are observed, the marvellous formation of animate and inanimate beings, to the ends of their existing, the adaptation of one thing to another, for the use and benefit of each respective being, and of the whole, he analogously concludes, that all this is the effect of an intelligent agent; and as these effects are so infinitely superior to those accomplished by the human being, he conceives the author of them to be perfect, and attributes to him the name of God. Hence it is evident, that the truth of the proposition, *There is a God*, can be perceived but by a series of analogical reasoning, from the effect to the cause; and therefore the truth of it cannot be discerned by *Beatie's* common sense, which comprehends intuitively, instantaneously, and instinctively.

The

The sixth chapter, of *Probable or Experimental Reasoning*, comes next in order. "In all our reasoning, says he, page 120, from the cause to the effect, we proceed on a supposition and a belief, that the cause of nature will continue to be, in time to come, what we experience it to be at present, and remember it to have been in time past. This presumption of continuance is the foundation of all our judgements concerning future events; and this, in many cases, determines our conviction as effectually as any proof or demonstration whatever, although the conviction arising from it be different in kind from what is produced by strict demonstration, as well as from those kinds of conviction that attend the evidence of sense, memory, and abstract intuition:"—which is no less than abstract nonsense, since no abstract ideas can have originated but from some previous and specific perceptions of sensible and particular objects, and are creatures of the mind; and therefore they cannot be intuitive, or known without some intermediate and antecedent perceptions.

"The highest degree of conviction, in reasoning from causes to effects, says he, is called *moral certainty*; and the inferior degrees result from that species of evidence which is called *probability*, or *verisimilitude*:—that all men will die, that

served the effects which result from the application of elastic or heavy bodies on wheels of certain proportions, and divisions of teeth, is convinced, from that which passes in his own mind, whenever he hath executed any thing with his own hands, that this artist was guided in all his operations by the direction of thought. Whenever therefore this person may, on future occasions, behold a mechanical composition, he readily infers, that it must have been the production of a thinking being, or of man.

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"The highest degree of conviction, in reasoning from causes to effects, says he, is called *moral certainty*; and the inferior degrees result from that species of evidence which is called *probability*, or *verisimilitude*:—that all men will die, that

“ that the sun will rise to-morrow, the sea ebb
“ and flow, &c. no man can doubt, without be-
“ ing accounted a fool. In these, and all other
“ instances, where our experience of the past has
“ been equally extensive and uniform, our judge-
“ ment concerning the future amounts to moral
“ certainty : we believe with full assurance, or at
“ least without doubt, that the same laws of nature
“ which have hitherto operated, will continue to
“ operate, as long as we foresee no cause to inter-
“ rupt or hinder their operation.

“ But no person who attends to his own mind,
“ will say, that in these cases our belief, or con-
“ viction, or assurance, is the effect of proof, or
“ of any thing like it. If reasoning be at all em-
“ ployed, it is only in order to give a clear view
“ of our past experience with regard to the point
“ in question. When this view is obtained,
“ reasoning is no longer necessary ; the mind by
“ its own intellectual force, and in consequence
“ of an irresistible and instinctive impulse, infers
“ the future from the past, immediately, and with-
“ out the intervention of any argument.”

Notwithstanding this hardy and round assertion,
“ that no person who attends to his own mind will
“ say, that in these cases our belief, or conviction,
“ or assurance, is the effect of proof, or of any
“ thing like it ;” I shall venture to be of a very
different opinion, and leave it to our readers
to

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to determine whether this assertor, or I, have most attended to our own mind. In order to set this matter in a fair light, it seems requisite to determine what are the ideas which have been constantly annexed to the word *proof*: and these are, according to the authority of Dr. *Johnson*, founded on the usage of authors of the most unquestionable skill in the *English* language, *evidence, testimony, convincing token, convincing argument, means of conviction*. Now let me apply this sense of the word *proof* to what hath been already quoted from this author: "In all our reasonings from the cause to the effect, we proceed on a supposition and a belief that the course of nature will continue to be, in time to come, what we experience it to be at present, and remember it to have been in time past: this presumption of continuance is the foundation of all our judgements concerning future events; and this, in many cases, determines our conviction as effectually as any proof or demonstration whatsoever. The highest degree of conviction, in reasoning from causes to effects, is called *moral certainty*: that all men will die, that the sun will rise to-morrow, &c. In these and all other instances, where our experience of the past has been equally extensive and uniform, our judgement concerning the future amounts to moral certainty."

The

The manner in which men reason on the preceding subjects is this: — I have lived to see ten thousand or any number of men to die; I have heard that all the preceding generations of men, consisting of millions of millions have died also: I have seen the sun rise ten thousand times; I have read and heard that it has daily done the same for six thousand years, or for two millions one hundred and ninety thousand days: from these unvarying evidences, I conclude that men will continue to die, and the sun to rise daily. Are these uniform instances of experience no convincing token, no convincing argument, or no means of conviction? Is our belief, conviction, or assurance, in these cases, not the effect of proof, or of any thing like it? And can there be an if—"that reasoning is employed only to give us
"a clear view of our past experience with regard
"to the point in question, and when that view is
"obtained, that reasoning is no longer necessary," when it is beyond contradiction, that the mind, by reasoning, infers from the uniform death of all preceding generations, that the present and future will yield to the same fate, and from the constant rising of the sun, from the creation to this day, that it will continue to rise on the subsequent? This is, indeed, what *Beattie* himself allows, and says, "the sea has ebbed and flowed twice every
"day

“ day in time past; therefore the sea will continue
 “ to ebb and flow twice every day in the time to
 “ come :” and, although this Writer, *Hume*, and
Campbell, as he asserts, have said the preceding
 “ is by no means a logical deduction of a conclu-
 “ sion from premises,” yet I presume they are all
 mistaken; for from the premises founded on the
 universal experience of all men in all ages, on
 what has invariably passed from the beginning of
 all things to this day, the conclusion is logically
 a *proof*, though not a demonstration, that they
 will so continue to the end. For what is the
 meaning of the term *logic*, but the art of reason-
 ing? And is it no part of that art, to reason analo-
 gically, and from the unvaried experience of what
 has daily happened for two millions one hundred
 and ninety thousand days, that the like will happen
 again to-morrow, and from which, as he allows,
 arises *moral certainty*? If he should still persist,
 that the conclusion is not logical, will he also
 deny, that from the past to the future is an infe-
 rence of conviction, since he has said, “ this pre-
 “ sumption of continuance is the foundation of
 “ all our judgements concerning future events,
 “ and determines our conviction as effectually as
 “ any proof or demonstration whatsoever?” Such
 being the state of things according to himself, is
 it not extremely singular that he should assert,
 “ the mind, by its own innate force, and in conse-
 “ quence

“quence of an irresistible and instinctive impulse,
 “infers the future from the past, immediately,
 “and without the intervention of any argument;”
 when it is evidently impossible, that an inference
 can be made without argumentation? I infer that
 the sun will rise to-morrow, from its having risen
 daily for two millions one hundred and ninety
 thousand days; and in like manner, of the in-
 stances of the death of man, and the flowing of
 the sea.

In fact, an *instinctive* force can, in no sense,
 have truth for its object, although an intuitive
 may. The former is an impassioned impulse of
 desire or aversion concerning things, and is in-
 susceptible of all reasoning, and of which truth
 can therefore never be the object: it may be of
 the latter, which is knowledge not obtained by
 deduction of reasoning, but instantaneously. In
 fact, if “the mind by its own innate force, in conse-
 “quence of an irresistible and instinctive impulse,
 “infers the future from the past, immediately,
 “and without the intervention of any argument;”
 then can a horse, or more ignoble brute, which
 is constantly impelled by instinct, infer the future
 from the past, as well as *James Beattie, LL.D.*

From what has been offered on this chapter, in
 all the instances which this writer hath adduced,
 is it not evident, that the truth of the respective
 objects is not perceived, “in consequence of an
 “irresistible

“irresistible and instinctive impulse; which infers
“the future from the past immediately, and
“without the intervention of any argument,” but
by inferences fairly deduced, according to the
only manner in which truth is to be discovered,
by probable and experimental reasoning? And
to suppose, in reasoning on things that have been
known by experiment, that the mind does not
infer that future events will resemble those which
have passed from similar causes, or, in things likely
to happen, that it does not compare the particu-
lar instances of those which have lapsed with these
which are present, and, from their dissimilitude
or likeness, infer the degree of probability of a
similar event, appears to me to be an egregious
error in the knowledge of the human intellect.

In the subsequent chapter he treats of *Analogical Reasoning*. “Reasoning, says he, page 126, from
“analogy, when traced up to its source, will be
“found in like manner to terminate in a certain
“instinctive propensity, implanted in us by our
“Maker, which leads us to expect that similar
“causes in similar instances do probably produce,
“or will produce, similar effects. The probabi-
“lity which this kind of evidence is fitted to il-
“lustrate, does, like the former, admit of a vast
“variety of degrees, from absolute doubting, up
“to moral certainty.”

It has been already shewn, that truth can never be the object of *instinct*; and the instances which he adduces, will incontrovertibly prove that the consequences which happen, according to the lowest degrees of probability, up to *moral certainty*, are neither the effects of instinctive, nor even of instantaneous, or of intuitive perception. For example: the first which he has brought, of “an ancient philosopher who was shipwrecked in a strange country, discovered certain geometrical figures drawn upon the sand upon the sea-shore, he was naturally led to believe, with a degree of assurance not inferior to moral certainty, that the country was inhabited by men, some of whom were men of study and science, like himself. Had these figures been less regular, and liker the appearance of chance-work, the presumption from analogy, of the country being inhabited, would have been weaker; and had they been of such a nature as left it altogether dubious, whether they were the works of accident or design, the evidence would have been too ambiguous to serve as a foundation for any opinion.”

Let us examine whether this instance will furnish us with a proof, that “reasoning from analogy, when traced up to its source, will be found to terminate in a certain instinctive propensity.”

"penfity." The fource of this philofopher's reasoning confifted in the geometrical figures which he found traced on the fand; and as he had never feen fuch figures delineated but by human beings, and thefe were too regular and exact to be the production of chance, he concluded, by comparing thefe figures on the fand, with others made by men, that the former were the works of man alfo. This then is abfolutely a conclufion drawn by reasoning analogoufly, from what he *had* feen performed, to that which he *had not*, and thence inferring, that the latter had originated from the fame caufe with the former. In what manner then can it with juftice be faid, that this reasoning did terminate in a certain inftinctive propenfity? Inftinct, it has been already faid, is an emotion of the foul, fpringing from defire or averfion, acting in the mind, without the intervention of reafon or deliberation; the power which determines the will of brutes. Did this philofopher, when he faw thefe figures on the fand, neither reafon nor deliberate on the caufe which moft probably might have produced them? Was not his will to believe them the works of men, determined by that vaft degree of fimilarity to thofe figures which he had experimentally feen delineated by human hands? And if the moral certainty, that thefe figures had been the production of a human being, arofe from an inftinctive propenfity to be-

lieve it, what reason can be adduced, that the long-eared quadruped, which is directed solely by instinct, would not, from seeing the like figures on sand, conclude that they were the operations of men?

In fact, that nothing may be wanting to prove the contrary of what he has asserted, he himself tells us, "in reasoning from analogy, we argue "from a fact or thing experienced, to something "similar not experienced; and from our view of "the former ariseth an opinion with regard to the "latter; which opinion will be found to imply a "greater or less degree of assurance; according "as the instance from which we argue is more or "less similar to the instance to which we argue." Can there be found, in any writer whatsoever, a passage that so perfectly subverts the assertion, *that all reasoning from analogy, traced to its source, will be found to terminate in a certain instinctive propensity?* for can that assurance, which is obtained "by "arguing from a fact experienced, to something "similar not experienced, and thence deducing "a degree of assurance, according as the instance "from which we argue is more or less similar to "the instance to which we argue," possibly be conceived to have arisen from a certain instinctive propensity, or from an instantaneous and irresistible impulse, which is Dr. Beattie's Common Sense?

But

But there is yet another instance, which he hath adduced to verify his assertion of an instinctive propensity to the purposes above mentioned, which is still more inconsistent and contradictory. Page 128, he says, "a child who has been burnt with a red-hot coal, is careful to avoid touching the flame of a candle; for, as the visible qualities of the latter are like to those of the former, he expects, with a very high degree of assurance, that the effects produced by the candle, operating on his fingers, will be similar to those produced by the burning coal." Now, if reasoning by "analogy, when traced up to its source, will be found to terminate in a certain instinctive propensity," how comes it to happen that this *instinctive* power, like all others of that kind, did not instantaneously operate, and prevent the child from touching the red-hot coal, and burning his fingers; and, without waiting to derive from experience, and from reasoning on the pain which had been caused by the burning coal, that he should again suffer in like manner, by touching the candle which resembled the coal, and thereby teach him to abstain from touching it? Surely, there can exist nothing less like an instinctive propensity than this reasoning analogically, from what had passed, that the like would again happen from substances so nearly resembling, as a flaming coal and a flaming candle. This then is evidently

a con-

a conclusion drawn from experience, in which there is nothing either intuitive, instantaneous, or instinctive: it is therefore incompatible with Dr. *Beattie's* common sense, and perfectly consentaneous with that of *Pere Buffier*, and other French writers.

Dr. *Beattie* tells us, however, "it deserves to be remarked, that the judgement which a child forms on these occasions may arise, and often doth arise, previous to education and reasoning, and while experience is very limited." In my opinion, after Dr. *Beattie* has shewn that the disinclination of a child to touch a candle arose from the experience of being burnt by the red-hot coal, he could not, conformably with that doctrine, have reasonably said, "that the judgement which a child forms on these occasions does often arise previous to reasoning," when it is manifest, that the reasoning of the child by analogy, is the reasoning that the wisest person of any age could have exerted in such case; and certainly he has afforded us no instance, that the judgement formed by a child on such occasions, hath ever arisen previous to reasoning, nor shewn how judgement can be formed without reasoning. We cannot but agree, that, although their experience may be very limited, yet it is evident, that this experience is adequate to the full purpose of self-preservation.

But,

P R E F A C E.

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But, that no doubt may remain in the minds of his readers, that a child does *not* form a judgement on such occasions previous to reasoning, he tells us, "A child, knowing that a lighted candle is a dangerous object, will be shy of touching a glow-worm, or a piece of wet fish, shining in the dark, because of their resemblance to the flame of a lighted candle; but, as this resemblance is but imperfect, his judgement with regard to the consequence of touching will probably be more inclined to doubt, than in the former case, where the instances were more similar."

Hence it is evident, that this instance, which is, *apparently*, adduced to evince that "the judgement which a child forms on such occasions, doth often arise, previous to reasoning," is nevertheless the fullest evidence that he forms no such previous judgement; and that he exerts every effort of reason that can be conceived, in such a state of things, by the wisest of mortals: for, from being previously burnt by the lighted candle, he has acquired the experience of what will be the probable event of a similar application to a similar thing; and by comparing the phenomena of the glow-worm and the shining fish, with the light of the candle, he infers, that the former will have a like effect on his finger with the latter, and abstains from touching its resemblance.

But

But then, by a still more accurate comparison between these objects, he finds their resemblance to be but imperfect; and thence his judgement entertains a doubt, whether the consequences of touching the glow-worm and shining fish may be similar to those of touching the candle. Such is the process of reasoning which Dr. *Beattie* has brought to prove, that the judgement of a child, on such occasions, doth often arise previous to reasoning; and that "reasoning from analogy, "when traced up to its source, will be found to "terminate in a certain instinctive propensity, "which leads us to expect, that similar causes, "in similar circumstances, do probably produce, "or will probably produce, similar effects;" and this instinctive propensity is his *common sense*, "that "perceives truth not by progressive argumentation, but by an instantaneous, instinctive, and "irresistible impulse;" or Dr. *Beattie* is mistaken in what he has advanced.

I come now to his section of *Faith in Testimony*; and in this he says, "to believe testimony is "agreeable to nature, to reason, and to sound "philosophy;" to which I shall object nothing. But certainly the faculty of faith can never be the same with common sense: and yet perhaps by this faculty, things are as intuitively believed, as objects are perceived by the external senses; and the

mind

P R E F A C E. lvii

mind receives them also as true, by a kind of instinctive propensity to believe whatever is marvellous and interesting. But in this section, Dr. *Beattie* has said nothing either of *intuition*, or of *instinct*.

Such then is the truth respecting this writer. By deviating from the definition of common sense as it is laid down by Pere *Buffier*, which consists in a judgement acquired by age and the use of reason, and setting up another of his own conception, which discerns all things by an intuitive, irresistible, instantaneous, and instinctive impulse, he hath rendered the science of that illustrious Author utterly inapplicable to his new principle. Notwithstanding this, all that has the least degree of merit, through his whole essay, is pillaged from the learned Jesuit, and other writers among the French, and ungratefully concealed, without acknowledging the obligation.

Hence it arises, that what has been said by *Beattie* in relation to the objects of common sense, as perceiving truth by an intuitive, irresistible, instantaneous, and instinctive impulse, is totally erroneous, and that all is right and true, when considered as objects of common-sense, as it is delineated by *Buffier*, a judgement of things formed by age, and the use of reason.

One act of meritorious service must nevertheless be ascribed to Dr. *Beattie*. He hath exposed
f many

many of the errors and absurdities of *Hume* his countryman, though a hundred times more remain to be described in their full deformity and mischief. To the memory of that man, however, his countrymen have erected an edifice; and they have atrociously placed the monumental remembrance of this Atheist on a rock, in a place of Christian burial, alluding, as I suppose, that his fame on that account deserved to be founded on an unperishable basis. What inscription is inserted on it, I know not, having seen nothing but a drawing of that monument. †

I shall now take leave of my Readers with requesting them to compare the translation of *Pere Buffier* with the publications of *Reid*, *Oswald*, and *Beattie*; but more especially with the latter two: they will then be convinced, how freely

† This monument, erected to the propagator of such principles as would subvert all religion, and the providence of God, remains untouched; though not long since the places of Christian worship, the sacred vessels belonging to the very altar itself, and other things of private property, were violated and destroyed by a rabble at Edinburgh, because the Roman Catholics were adoring God according to their own consciences. And it must not be forgotten, that these wanton acts of violence and injustice were openly perpetrated in the metropolis of Scotland, by the immediate instigation of some of the meek and pious disciples of a merciful Redeemer, and with the notorious connivance and approbation of the worthy Magistrates of that Country, who, in the midst of convivial mirth and jollity, secretly exulted at the very moment those glorious operations of fanatic zeal were carrying on.

P R E F A C E. lix

freely they have pillaged, and how designedly they have concealed their plagiarisms; they will then be convinced also, how egregiously they have mangled the production of the learned Jesuit, and, by placing another head on the body which he had formed, how criminally they have attempted, by that alteration, to pass their heterogeneous productions as legitimately begotten by themselves: whereas, by those means, they have endeavoured to make an union of admirable science and instruction with a head incapable of being connected with it, but as a disgrace; I mean, that, by rejecting the idea of *Buffier*, respecting Common Sense, and by adopting another of their own fabrication, they have as it were reversed the image of Nebuchadnezzar, and, instead of feet of clay, and a head of brass, they have made the head of clay, and left the rest of the body to remain in its original substance.



firstly they have suffered, and how delightfully
they have enjoyed it in the past; they will
thereby be convinced also how agreeably they have
managed the production of the desired result
and by placing another hand on the body which
the first formed, how effectively they have ac-
complished, by that attention, to pass their hands
generous production is completely dependent on by
themselves; whereas by their means they have
endeavored to make a union of admirable re-
sults and in addition with a head incapable of be-
ing connected with it, but as a digression I mean,
that by rejecting the idea of a body, respecting
Common Sense, and by adopting another of their
own fabrication, they have as it were reversed the
image of the production, and instead of feet of
clay, and a head of brass, they have made the
head of clay, and left the rest of the body to
remain in its original state.

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*Of the different kinds of First Truths,
whence they are drawn, and what
they have essentially in common*

7

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are derived from the sensation we
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9

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TREATISE

ON

FIRST TRUTHS.

PLAN and DIVISION of the WORK.

NO subject can perhaps open a larger field to the expectations of the Reader, and be, at the same time, more alarming to the fears of the author, than what is treated of in this volume. To know truths in their very source; to analyse those to which we must ascend, in order to ascertain whatever is necessary to be proved, and which constitute the utmost boundary of human enquiry; to deduce principles capable of dispelling the mist of vulgar prejudice, the perplexities of the schools, and the prepossessions even of certain learned and modish philosophers—what can be a more interesting object?

^{2.}
Subject of the
piece.

B

The

2 A TREATISE ON

PLAN.

2.
The Author
proceeds to in-
vestigate all
truths in their
source.

The perception, in fact, of first truths is, as it were, the key to all the sciences; the source or cause of every just decision; the surest guide to the most accurate knowledge; the very soul and essence, in some sort, of all truth in general, which Logic attains only in part, though it has the honour to be styled the organ of truth; but it is no more than the organ of truth consequentially: and this supposes principles already known; so that, as experience demonstrates, a man may be an excellent Logician, and yet fall into considerable errors, from an imperfect knowledge of the first truths; whilst those, which are to be drawn from the inmost recesses and most immediate operations of the human mind, belong to that more extensive science which forms the subject of this treatise. If it shall be considered by some as truly metaphysical, they will not perhaps be mistaken; but, whatever it may be, it must so closely accompany, precede or follow Logic, that they mutually lend a necessary support to each other. Logic therefore remains in some measure incomplete, until it be joined to this, which likewise, in various places, supposes the former; but those two articles, being united, furnish every thing that relates to the science of the human understanding, and teach us to form thence the true art of thinking justly, and with precision;—the object most deserving the attention of man; the most solid fruit of science.

If

If the subject of this book be interesting to the Reader, how very formidable must it appear to the author! The researches it necessarily implies, demand reflections that are frequently abstruse; and, whatever care may be taken to explain them in the clearest manner, they are little relished, and frequently as little understood, by men of ordinary capacity. I have in this work endeavoured to found them on common sense; but common sense itself is not always easily conceived, or precisely understood, by those who have not made themselves familiar with objects above the capacity and notions of the vulgar.

P L A N.

3.
Difficulty of the
subject.

It would be some consolation could we securely hope for the approbation of the learned; but this is another difficulty we have to encounter. Those who, by their profession, affect to be masters in abstracted subjects, are sometimes mistaken in the most important truths, when they are not dressed with the formalities and expressions that have the sanction of their authority. We can surely have but little to hope from men who treat Logic as superficial, merely because they find it to contain nothing but what is intelligible, because it is stripped of false subtleties, and because the practice and rules are so far abridged, that the difficulties with which it generally abounds appear next to nothing.

4.
Censures of
scholastic Philo-
sophers to be
dreaded;

A TREATISE ON

P L A N.
5.
and of modern
Philosophers.

If I have thus reason to dread the attacks of some scholastic philosophers—I say, of some only; for many, no doubt, are capable of uniting acuteness with solidity of argument—what better treatment can be expected from those who have acquired celebrity by their new plan of philosophy? Their very names are so much revered, that to many they appear impressed with a species of infallibility. I cannot, however, persuade myself that the great names of Des Cartes, Malbranche, and others of similar renown, are more to be apprehended than those of Plato and Aristotle; and I must confess, that I should think it a reproach to be alarmed at either, or to hesitate in adopting an opinion contrary to theirs, when under the guidance of reason. We are indebted to Des Cartes for a methodical mode of reasoning, derived from his writings or example; and our obligations to him are even greater than some of his followers imagine, because his method is sometimes useful in attacking himself. Malbranche seduced the imagination of many; but the Metaphysics of Locke have detached a great part of Europe from systems which are chiefly founded on the notion that we have no clear evidence of common principles, whilst we are more in the dark with respect to those substituted in their place. The ancients gave into extremes; their reformers have fallen into others:

others: a medium is to be observed, particularly in the investigation of first truths.

The important advantages of distinguishing first truths are of themselves obvious. By what means, in fact, is the little knowledge of which we are capable, rendered defective? It is, because, in the course of our arguments, propositions occur which raise doubts in our minds, or are differently conceived by others. We then endeavour to prove them: if our proofs fail to convince, we adduce others: but, in ascending thus from one proof to another, propositions must at length be found, that require none; otherwise life would be consumed in accumulating proofs, without proving any thing decisively, and without our having any fixed idea. To this we must attribute the frequent confusion and uncertainty in our opinions and judgements. Hence it evidently follows, that there are such propositions as require neither explanation nor proof; but it is of the last importance to know them; and those are what we denominate *first truths*.

Some persons ask whether there really exist any such things as first truths. In answer to those, I say that such a matter deserves enquiry; and at any rate, if no others should result from our researches, we should at least discover that there was no truth upon earth: and this alone would supply their place; for, if there be no first truths,

B 3

neither

P L A N.

6.

Great importance of the knowledge of first truths.

7.

Some persons ask whether there are any first truths.

6 A T R E A T I S E, &c.

PLAN.

neither can there be second, third, &c. In that case there must be nothing true, and it would even be folly to seek for truth in any thing, though the highest wisdom consists in seeking it in all things.

3.
First truths
defined.

As things are best understood by plain and simple expressions, it will be sufficient to give an exact definition of first truths. They are then *propositions so clear and obvious, that they can neither be proved nor refuted by other propositions of greater perspicuity.* All I have to offer therefore on a subject of so much importance, and which is the basis of every science, shall be reduced to few heads, and form the different parts of this work.

Division of
the work.

First, What are the different kinds of first truths, whence they are derived, and what essential relation they have together.

Secondly, What first truths may be discovered with respect to all beings in general.

Thirdly, What are first truths with regard to spiritual beings.

Fourthly, First truths with respect to material or corporeal beings.

As an Appendix to this, shall be added such knowledge as may hold the place of first truths with regard to each of the sciences more generally known.

P A R T I.

Of the different kinds of First Truths;
whence they are deduced, and the essen-
tial relation they mutually have.

PART I.

Of the different kinds of Fish-Trawls;
whence they are used, and the effects
of their use.



CHAPTER I.

Of that species of First Truths which are derived from the sensation we have of our own existence, and from what we feel within ourselves.

THE original source and first principle of every truth which we are capable of comprehending, is the interior sense we each of us have of our own existence, and what we feel within ourselves. This is, I say, the foundation of every other truth, and the basis of all human knowledge. Nothing else can give us a more home conviction that the object of our thought is as truly existent as our thought itself; for the object, the thought, and the inward sense we have of them, are really nothing but ourselves, who think, exist, and have an interior sense of those things.

Every attempt to prove this point, or to set it in a clearer light, would only serve to render it more dark and unintelligible: to go farther, would be to seek something clearer than the very light itself, and must inevitably lead to darkness.

9.
Inward sensation or feeling.

First species of truth.

10.
To go beyond this, is to plunge into darkness.

We

PART I.

11.
Sceptics do not
merit a refuta-
tion.

We must necessarily adhere to this first rule, which is of itself most apparent, and therefore termed evidence in the supreme degree. Sceptics may in vain object, that they doubt whether they exist or not: it would be loss of time to attempt to convince them of their folly, by telling them that, if they doubt of every thing, it must be therefore true that they exist, as they cannot doubt without existing. They have it always in their power to assert the contrary, though they may think otherwise, and shelter themselves under ridiculous terms, of which it would be equally ridiculous to attempt a serious refutation. It is a folly to shew the truth to those who endeavour to shut their eyes against it, and who will not even admit the first proposition of invincible evidence, *I think, I feel, I exist.*

12.
Proof of our
existence, by Des
Cartes.

This has given rise to the question, whether Des Cartes did not fall into an error, by proposing his own existence as a consequence of his actual thought, when he said, *I think, therefore I am*; for it is by the same perception of the soul we feel the internal sense both of our thought and our existence. If Des Cartes absolutely pretended to give us thereby a fresh conviction of our existence, as some people have supposed, his endeavours were useless and puerile: but those who defend him assert, that his only view, in urging such an argument, was to give us an example

example of the analysis of the most simple consequences that can be drawn from a principle; for, in fact, *I exist* is a consequence of the proposition *I think*, as we cannot think without existing. *I think*, however, is not a consequence of the proposition *I exist*, since we may exist without thinking: but the consequence here is so intimately united with its principle, that there can be no danger of a mistake; and yet it requires some acuteness to perceive how far one is not the other. Thus the famous consequence *I think, therefore I am*, is strictly true and just: it has but little merit however as a consequence, and still less as a discovery.

A more important reflection to be made is, that every consequence, which is clearly deduced from our actual thought, partakes of the nature of its evident certainty in the supreme degree; and such are those demonstrations we term metaphysical, or geometrical, which are nothing but our actual thought applied to different circumstances. We shall however dwell no longer on this subject at present, as we mean to explain it more fully in another place.

13.
Metaphysical
demonstrations
evident in the
supreme degree.

PART I.

CHAPTER II.

Of those who admit no other rule of truth but the internal sentiment of what we feel within ourselves.

^{14.}
Sceptics despised, and yet imitated.

WHAT has been advanced in the preceding chapter against sceptics, though confined to a few lines, may perhaps appear superfluous, as their folly is so universally acknowledged and despised: but, if absolute scepticism be now no longer maintained, we may however venture to declare, that it never was more closely imitated; for, excepting the first rule or source of truth which is drawn from our internal sentiment, some philosophers of these days disdain to acknowledge or admit any other kinds of truth and evidence.

^{15.}
Evidence with regard to the existence of bodies.

When they are therefore asked, if it be evidently certain that there are bodies, and that we receive impressions from them, they roundly answer, No: we have no evident certainty of the matter; because, say they, we have not such knowledge, either by an internal sensation of our own experience, or by any necessary consequence that may be deduced from it. This an English philosopher has made no scruple to publish to the world.

What

What other evident certainty is to be admitted by those philosophers, we cannot even conjecture: Is it the testimony of the senses, divine revelation, human authority, or, in short, the immediate impression of God upon us?

The testimony of the senses, being corporeal, cannot be admitted by those who previously deny the existence of bodies. Divine revelation and human authority likewise make no impression upon us but by the testimony of the senses; that is, either by our eyes, which have seen the miracles of the Almighty; or of our ears, which have heard the discourses of men sent by him: but those channels of the senses must be looked upon as uncertain by him who has no evidence of the existence of bodies.

In fine, the immediate impression of God supposes a God, and a being different from me. Now, if the internal sentiment of what I am, and of what passes within me, be the only things evident, whatever is not absolutely that internal sentiment must not be evident to me. We shall set this matter in a stronger light in the next chapter.

CHAP. II.

16.

Their system does not admit any other certainty:

17.

neither that of the senses, nor of authority;

18.

nor that of the immediate impression of God.

PART I.

CHAPTER III.

Consequences of the opinion of some philosophers, who admit no other evidence but the internal sentiments of our own actual experience.

19.
Manner of
proving that
there is no cer-
tainty with re-
gard to the exist-
ence of bodies:

THE first consequence of this principle, which we have already touched upon, is very natural: it is, that we have no evident certainty of the existence of bodies, not even of our own; for, in short, a mind or soul, such as ours, may feel the impression made on it by other bodies, or by its own in particular. As its body, however, is very distinct from this impression; and as, according to those gentlemen, this impression, or another exactly similar, may be absolutely felt in the soul without the existence of bodies; it follows also, that our internal sentiment affords no conviction of the existence of any body, and that we have no evident certainty of any such matter.

20.
nor with re-
gard to our own
existence before
our actual per-
ception:

2dly. Another consequence equally just is, that we have no evident certainty of what did or did not happen to us yesterday, whether we existed, or did not exist. I think, for my own part, I am evidently certain that I was in the world yesterday: but this judgement may be liable to error, according to the philosophers of whom we have been speaking. Their opinion is, that I can have no evidence but by

by an internal perception actually operating : I actually have indeed the perception of the remembrance of what happened to me ; but this remembrance is no more than an inward perception of what I am thinking at present ; that is to say, of an actual thought which is not the same with that of yesterday, and no longer exists to day. By a parity of reason, I must be still less certain whether I have not been in the world two or three thousand years ; and whether, during that long period of time, I may not have animated the body of a crocodile, an elephant, or a sparrow. It is very evident that I have no remembrance of any such thing ; but all this might have been so, without any actual remembrance of mine ; as it really happens to each of us to remain many months in the womb of our mother, without our having the least traces of any such matter on our mind. Want of memory is therefore no proof or evident certainty against what may be supposed with regard to the antiquity of my existence, and the various situations through which I may have passed, according to the system of the Metempsychosis.

With the same facility and reflection each of us must be persuaded, that we have no evident certainty whether we have not existed eternally, as we might have existed in that manner without remembering it. Should it be objected, that

we

21.
nor whether
we may not have
existed from all
eternity:

PART I.

we have been produced, we may answer, that we have no evident certainty thereof; for our having been produced is a thing past, and is neither the perception nor the internal sensation of what actually passes within us. We might, say we, have an internal perception by which we judge that we have been produced; but the perception of what we judge and believe, is not the inward perception of the thing itself which we believe, but merely of the thought by which we believe that we have existed before the present moment.

22.
nor whether
any other being
exists besides
ourselves:

Another consequence, in fine, equally just with the preceding, is, that we have each of us no certainty of the existence of any other beings in the world besides ourselves; for, if impressions be made in us, the occasion of which we attribute to spirits and intelligences that are supposed to exist distinct from us, and we have an internal sensation of those impressions received in us; yet, as this internal sensation carries no conviction but of itself, and is altogether interior, it gives us no evident certainty of any being distinct from ourselves.

Let the soul, in fact, reflect as long as it will on its own perceptions, the occasion of which it ascribes to intelligences different from itself, it must reason thereon as it does with regard to those ideas the cause of which it attributes to bodies.

bodies. Now, as the soul, according to the philosophers we are speaking of, is not evidently certain whether it may not be of such a nature as, of itself, and by its own form and constitution alone, to experience the impressions of which it ascribes the cause to bodies that exist separate from it, it has not a more evident certainty of the existence of any spirit or being whatever, exclusive of itself; therefore it has no evidence to prove that it has not existed from all eternity, or even to shew that it is not the only being that exists in the world.

After so singular a consequence, it is useless to point out all the numerous arguments which might be deduced to shew, that I have no evidence whether I am actually asleep, or awake; whether I enjoy the liberty of acting, or not acting; the privilege of free-will, or otherwise; whether I am the cause, or only the occasion, of the free motions of my soul; and whether one body may ever be acted upon by another body. All those consequences are so obvious and glaring of themselves, that they require no further elucidation.

23.
nor whether
impressions ex-
ternally produced
are not the mere
modifications of
our being.

PART I.

CHAPTER IV.

That the preceding consequences oblige us to admit other rules of truth and evident certainty, besides the internal sensation of our perception.

24.
The preceding consequences are just, though extravagant.

FROM the extravagance of the propositions contained in the last chapter, many will, perhaps, imagine that they have been inserted rather with a jocular design, than in order to prove any thing solid: but, should any of our Readers entertain such an idea, it is our request that they may examine, with the strictest severity, whether they are not necessarily deduced from their principle, and that too as clearly as any geometrical demonstrations.

25.
No man in his senses seriously admits them.

I am in no pain, however, as to the judgment that may be formed with respect to the truth of some of those consequences; such as our having a right, each of us, to doubt whether we are not the only beings that exist in the world. I am convinced that no man of sound intellect will be tempted to consider this as true, or to suppose that any other men in their senses can seriously maintain such an opinion; or, to speak more plainly, every person must look upon those who could attempt it as downright madmen.

I shall

I shall not at present enter into a detail of other consequences; for, if one alone be found absurd, that is necessarily derived from the principle, it of course follows, that the principle itself must be absurd: and this is sufficient for all that I now wish to prove.

Let us sum up the parts of this argument. One, at least, of the consequences we have pointed out, is an absurd proposition: it is however necessarily and clearly deduced from its principle: therefore their principle is equally absurd; for it is demonstrable, that consequences are of the same nature with their principle. It is not then true, that we have no other rule of evident certainty but the internal sentiment of our own action.

✓ Men may in vain say, that no others can be offered, but what are liable to error. This point shall be examined hereafter: for the present we shall only observe, that, as the former necessarily leads to absurdities, it must in itself be subject to the most stupid errors; because it tends to exclude all certainty of every thing distinct from ourselves, such as God, the creatures, every other being, and particularly all bodies, and even all that we have said, done, or thought, but a moment before the actual thought we form of those matters.

26.
If they are
absurd, their
principle is
equally so.

27.
This principle
should be re-
jected;

PART I

This would be to leave the world without any principle of *truth*, as to what is distinct from ourselves, with regard to those things that affect and interest us the most, and which are the great incentive to action, and the main-spring, as it were, of our whole life; it would be saying, in other words, that there is no longer any fixed rule of reason, conduct, or common sense: but, whatever certain philosophers may assert to the contrary, the world still possesses common sense, conduct, and reason, and consequently truth, certainty, and evidence, with respect to things distinct from us.

28.
especially as the
contrary propo-
sitions are judi-
cious,

Propositions moreover, the reverse of consequences which we find manifestly absurd, are, by the laws of contrariety, necessarily judicious.

29.
though their
certainty is not
an internal sen-
sation.

Our certainty, for example, that we have not always existed with the use of reason, and a number of other similar certainties of universal experience, are not in fact the internal sensation of any actual perception of the soul, as they relate to things past; and, as what is no more, cannot be the sensation of our actual perception, this certainly therefore must be referred to another source, or rule of truth, to which some persons seem to be strangers: and this I shall call *the common sentiment of nature*, or, as it is generally styled, *common sense*; the nature of which I shall endeavour to explain.

C H A P.

CHAPTER V.

Of that species of first truths deduced from the rule of common sense, which is rarely mentioned by philosophers.

THIS title will perhaps appear new in a treatise of philosophy, as philosophers seldom make it a subject of their reflections; either from a notion that *common sense* is an object too vulgar to engage their attention, or from finding it no easy task to ascertain its nature and prerogatives with clearness and precision. Whatever may be the cause, the greatest errors, in my opinion, have been produced from an imperfect idea of this matter: in it are to be found principles incontestable, and at the same time plausible, of all that a rational man is capable of knowing, with regard to those first truths that relate to extraneous objects.

Though no expression is more frequently heard than that of *common sense*, yet nothing is less generally known than the precise idea which those words should convey; for they may be taken in various senses, which form so many different ideas.

30.
Importance of
the rule of com-
mon sense.

31.
The words com-
mon sense have
different mean-
ings.

PART I.

32.
It is not a mere
corporeal fa-
culty.

Many consider it as a faculty seated in the brain, with which, as with their centre, all the faculties of each of the senses, of the sight, hearing, taste, smell, and feeling, have a communication; but the common sense here understood is something more perfect, and more essential to man, and may be possessed by him, though he should be deprived of one or more of the senses.

33.
Definition of
common sense.

What is here meant by common sense, is *that disposition or quality which Nature has placed in all men, or evidently in the far greater number of them, in order to enable them all, when they have arrived at the age and use of reason, to form a common and uniform judgement with respect to objects different from the internal sentiment of their own perception, and which judgement is not the consequence of any anterior principle.* To such as desire examples of those opinions that are chiefly verified by the rule and power of common sense, the following are offered.

34.
First truths dic-
tated by com-
mon sense.

1. There are other beings and other men in the world besides me.
2. There is in them something that is called truth, wisdom, prudence; and this something is not merely arbitrary.
3. There is in me something that I call intelligence or mind, and something which is not that intelligence or mind, and which is named

body; so that each possesses properties different from the other.

4. What is generally said and thought by men in all ages and countries of the world, is true.

5. All men have not combined to deceive and impose on me.

6. What is not intelligence, or mind, cannot produce all the effects of intelligence or mind; neither can a fortuitous jumble of particles of matter form a work of such order, and so regular motion, as a watch.

It is not my intention to confine the number of first truths to the preceding six or seven, nor that they should be admitted equally, and with the same readiness, by all mankind: but they are so many examples, some of which at least cannot be justly rejected; and they are all of such a nature, that if, in the practice of life, any person should seriously refuse to admit them as truths, we could not avoid considering him seriously as one disordered in his senses.

Let us now proceed to a more particular consideration of the parts of the definition already given of common sense.

1st. I say that Nature enables men, who have arrived at the use of reason, to judge of things which we know not by the internal perception

35.
Primitive knowledge different from the sentiment of our own perception.

PART I.

of our own experience. We have shewn that no person, without being guilty of extravagance, can deny certain truths, which cannot, in any manner, be proved by internal sentiment, and which are truths essential to the business of life: such, at least, is this; *other beings, and in particular other men, exist besides myself.*

36.
Truths that require no proof.

2dly. I say, that true judgements or opinions, dictated by Nature and common sense, are *first truths*: for I declare those to be judgements so clear, that they neither can be defended nor attacked by propositions more clear.

37.
They are common to all mankind.

3dly. I say that the natural disposition by which those first truths are inspired is common to all men, or, at least, to the far more considerable number of them; otherwise the want of principles would incapacitate the greater part from forming any true and certain judgement with respect to extraneous matters, however essential those might be to the conduct of life; that is, they would be incapable of reason or conduct.

38.
They necessarily determine the mind.

4thly. I say that those judgements or opinions are rules of truth, as real and secure as the rule drawn from the internal sentiment of our perception: not that they strike the mind in the same forcible manner, but with the like necessity of assent. As it is impossible for me, therefore, to judge that I do not think when I am actually think-

thinking, so it is equally impossible for me to judge seriously that *I am the only being in the world; that all men have conspired to deceive me in every thing they say; and that a work of human industry, such as a watch or clock, which regularly marks the hours, might be the mere effect of chance.*

As the man who should dispute the certainty of his own existence, could not be convinced of it by any prior, or more simple truth; in like manner, if a person should maintain that a watch might have been formed by chance or accident, the contrary could never be demonstrated to him by another truth more simple, or more evident; for every demonstration supposes a principle admitted between him who is to convince and the person to be convinced: but, in the case specified, there could be no common principle between them, as there would be no prior truth, about which they might be agreed, relative to the matter to be proved.

We must however acknowledge, that there is a distinction to be made between the first species of truth derived from internal sentiment, and every other sort of first truths; for, with respect to the former, we cannot suppose it susceptible of the least shadow of doubt; and in regard to the rest it may be alledged, that they do not possess an evidence in the supreme degree: but we must still remember, that, as the other first truths, which are

39.
They have no
anterior truths.

40.
Difference of
their certainty
from that of
the internal
sentiment.

are not of the former kind, relate only to objects distinct from us, they cannot make so lively an impression on us, as those of which the object is within ourselves; so that to deny the former we should be out of ourselves, and to dispute the rest we must only be out of our senses. To avoid, therefore, every subterfuge and equivocation, in case any persons should obstinately refuse the title of evident certainty to all other truths but the first kind, that is, the internal sentiment of our own immediate perception, and allow only the name of *probability in the supreme degree* to the rest; this, it is clear, would be cavilling merely about words, and should give me no manner of pain; for they must still coincide in opinion with me, that those sorts of *probabilities in the supreme degree*, are deemed *evident certainties* with mankind; and whoever should doubt them in the practice of life, must renounce all title to common sense.

41.
Common sense
is not an innate
idea.

Common sense, however, as I have explained it, is not an innate idea, as some persons may imagine: nor can it be considered as such, without confounding our notions of things; for, in saying *idea*, we say an actual thought; and what is meant here, is no more than a disposition to think certain things on certain occasions. Besides, an idea is nothing but a simple representation of things; and the question here relates to a judgment

ment formed with respect to things and their existence.

CHAP. V.

This, after all, is perhaps no more than what was meant by those who have been such warm advocates for *innate ideas*, without having ever sufficiently examined these terms: but, if they understand by *innate ideas* what I mean by *common sense*, I shall not cavil about words; and, as they cannot avoid coinciding with me, and admitting *common sense* for the first rule of truth, I shall readily agree to admit their *innate ideas*, taking them however in their precise and true signification.

CHAPTER VI.

Digression, on the truth of the existence of God, in order to examine whether it is a first truth.

IT may be asked whether the truth of the existence of God is not one of those principles of truth, or one of those first truths, which nature and common sense dictate to all men; and whether this is not what is meant when we say that we know God naturally, and by the natural idea alone which we have of him. This question admits of two remarks.

I. The existence of God may be naturally known without being a first truth; for, whatever

we

42.
Whether the existence of God is a first truth.

43.
It may not be so, though naturally known.

PART II

we know by rational conclusions drawn from any of the first truths, we know it naturally with as great certainty as those very first truths themselves. Thus we naturally know that the sun is incomparably greater than the whole earth, though there is a truth more simple, more immediately obvious to, and more easily conceived by, the mind.

44.
It may be a first truth with respect to some,

In case any men should appear endowed with sufficient penetration to perceive certain consequences as quickly, as the first truths whence they are derived; the knowledge of God might be then considered as a *first truth* to some minds.

45.
and not with regard to all.

With respect to others, and even to the general race of men, there are, I think, first truths more immediately obvious to the mind, and which it conceives more quickly and easily, than the knowledge of God. It even appears incontrovertible, that children have a knowledge of many things, relative to sensible and corporeal objects, before that; or rather the knowledge of sensible objects forms, generally speaking, necessary degrees by which we ascend to the knowledge of God. This is what the apostle St. Paul intimates to us in those remarkable words, *Invisibilia enim ipsius à creatura mundi per ea quæ facta sunt, intellecta conspiciuntur, sempiterna quoque ejus virtus & divinitas*—that is, *We attain to the knowledge of the invisible being of God by the things of this world that have been*

been created and formed; and they likewise display the eternity of his power and divinity.

CHAP. VI.

This may help to solve a difficulty proposed by certain persons with respect to some few savages, among whom it is said, no traces could be found of the knowledge of God. This discovery, if true, shews plainly that the idea of God is neither *innate*, nor a first truth; but it does not by any means prove, that it is not a very natural and very easy knowledge. If those savages have not expanded their ideas, or exercised their minds, more than is usual with children among us, we should not wonder at their not having acquired a knowledge of such easy acquisition: but, however weak their understanding might be, the moment the proofs of the existence of a God were laid before them, it was found that they had sufficient capacity to comprehend them.

46.
Whether sa-
vages have not
a knowledge of
God.

With the common race of men, however, it appears that there are some truths anterior to the knowledge of the existence of God; as these: *I am not as I am from myself; there are other beings besides me; there are bodies; the subordination that reigns through the whole cannot have been produced but by some superior intelligence.* Thus the truth of the existence of God, as it supposes other knowledge, is not a first truth evident of itself; for, however evident any truth may be when it is so only by rational deduction and argument, and supposes

47.
Truths more
immediately ob-
vious to the
mind.

PART I.

48.
Metaphysical
evidence and de-
monstration.

supposes another truth that is prior, it cannot be placed in the number of first truths.

We here offer our assistance to certain philosophers, as it may be useful in extricating them from those difficulties in which they involve themselves by endeavouring to find a metaphysical proof or demonstration of the existence of God. All that is necessary for them, on the occasion, is to agree with others and themselves about what they are pleased to call *metaphysical evidence*. They generally will have it to consist in the perception of what we intimately experience within ourselves, of our thoughts, ideas, or sentiments; and in the consequences thence deduced; which consequences are likewise the perception of our own thoughts, as hath been observed (N^o. 41.) The demonstrations of Geometry are therefore said to have a metaphysical evidence, because they are nothing but the perception of our ideas, and of their reciprocal fitness and connection.

But, as the existence of a being really distinct from us is a thing different from the intimate perception of our own thoughts or ideas, it cannot be proved by a *metaphysical evidence* taken in that sense; because that evidence, by its definition, is no more than the perception of our own thoughts or sentiments, which demonstrate only what is within us, and nothing extraneous; otherwise our own perceptions, that are nothing but

but ourselves, would be at the same time a thing different from ourselves; which is incomprehensible.

CHAP. VI.

Some Geometricians are led into a palpable error, in imagining that things demonstrated by Geometry, exist, out of their thought, exactly similar to the demonstration formed of them in their mind. They must be quickly sensible of their mistake, if they will but reflect a moment on the perfect globe, the imaginary properties of which are demonstrated in Geometry, though the thing itself has no real existence in nature. Geometry shews nothing of the existence of things, but only what they are, supposing them to exist really such as they are conceived by the mind. And indeed, were all created things existing annihilated, Geometry would not lose a single point of its demonstrations; the circle would still remain a round figure, of which all the points of circumference would be equally distant from the centre.

49.
Error of Geometricians.

It is then certain that, by a metaphysical evidence, taken in the sense recently mentioned, we can only demonstrate what is inherent in ourselves, and nothing of the existence of things of a different nature. Wherefore, unless we suppose God and ourselves to be the same being, it will be impossible, in the sense we mention, to find a metaphysical demonstration of the existence of God,

50.
Whether there are any metaphysical proofs of the existence of God.

PART I. God, and consequently it will be useless to seek it; for no truth whatever, with respect to an object different from our ideas and internal perception, is susceptible of that kind of evidence. The thing however will not be the less really evident on that account, since nature has placed in us other principles of evidence, which we cannot disavow without renouncing common sense, and the sentiments Nature has dictated to all mankind.

CHAPTER VII.

A new explanation, with examples of the qualities essential to first truths.

51.
Nature of first truths.
1st. They cannot be proved.

AS the ground-work of this treatise is the knowledge of first truths, we cannot be too careful in ascertaining their essential qualities; which we shall endeavour to make more sensible by the assistance of examples. The first of those qualities is, to be so clear, that, if we attempt to defend or attack them, it cannot be done but by propositions which manifestly are neither more clear, nor more certain.

52.
They are admitted in all countries, and at all times.

2. They are so universally received amongst men, in all times and countries, and by all degrees of capacity, that those who attack them are, comparatively to the rest of mankind, manifestly less

less than one to a hundred, or even a thousand.

CHAP. VII.

3. They are so strongly imprinted in our minds, that we regulate our conduct by them, notwithstanding all the speculative refinements of those who imagine contrary opinions, and who even act themselves conformably, not to their own imaginary notions, but to those very first truths that are universally received.

53.
They are practically followed by all.

By those three qualities, it is easy to evince the propositions that should be considered as first truths. If, in fact, a man, for example, should attempt to question the certainty of the existence of bodies, by what more certain proposition will he be able to prove any thing for, or against this truth?—Will he say on the one hand, in order to prove it, that God has given me an idea of it, and, if that idea were not true, God must deceive me? But this argument contains three or four propositions, each of which most assuredly is neither more clear, nor more immediately obvious to my mind, than this truth, *there are bodies*. On the contrary, St. Paul, to whom the true proofs of the existence of God were much better known than to our philosophers, tells us *that invisible Being is conceived by visible things*. Visible things are therefore known to us before an invisible God; and visible things are bodies: the knowledge we

54.
Application of those rules to the certainty of bodies.

D

have

PART I.

have then of bodies, is present to our minds, previous even to the knowledge of God.

Certain philosophers, it is true, insist on a proof of the existence of God, which does not suppose any visible objects: I have, say they, an idea of God naturally; therefore God exists. But whom shall they be able to convince that this proposition, *I have naturally an idea of God*, or this other, *If I have naturally an idea of God, God exists*—whom, I say, will they be able to convince that either of these two propositions is more clear, more certain, and more immediately obvious to my mind, than this, *there are bodies*?

^{55.}
Their existence
as certain as
any other,

On the other hand, what proposition more certain, or more clear, can be conceived, to attack this, *there are bodies*? Will this be of any force, *We are evidently certain of nothing but the internal sentiment of our own perception*? But we have observed, that this proposition would lead to fanaticism; as, by admitting it in all its latitude, each of us might rationally doubt whether any other being existed besides ourselves. Will this other proposition answer the purpose; *I might absolutely experience all that I do, without the existence of bodies*? This proposition is far from being more certain and clear, as the pretended *possibility* it includes has no place in the natural sentiment, but only finds admission with certain speculative minds, who

who carry their speculations beyond the just limits. Were such a *possibility* indeed founded on common sense, we might reasonably judge that all we actually experience does not suppose bodies, and consequently entertain a rational doubt of their existence; nor should we act irrationally in regulating the conduct of our lives in conformity to such a doubt. Let me ask then, whether it is a mark of common sense, to be restrained in the conduct of life by an uncertainty of the existence of bodies? As this uncertainty is a manifest folly, the contrary certainty must be wisdom and truth united. To this we must adhere, unless we would confound the most certain ideas of the human mind, and adopt vain refinements in the place of true philosophy.

But in sleep, or a delirium, do we not feel nearly the same impressions which we usually experience by the means of bodies? Perhaps they may be nearly the same; but most undoubtedly they are not the same: and, if a person awake should not find himself quite differently affected from what he is when dreaming, he would be as little worthy of any rational attention, as if he were actually in a delirium or profound sleep. Besides, if in these two conditions we feel impressions resembling those that are commonly made on us by bodies, it is only because we before received those impressions from the bodies

PART I.

themselves, and they are then renewed by the agitation of the spirits. As those two conditions therefore necessarily suppose bodies, they shew their existence, instead of demonstrating that *I might experience all that I do, without the existence of bodies*: for, if there were no bodies what should I experience, or what indeed could I experience? I neither know, nor can know, not having any experience of the matter; and I cannot, independently of that, penetrate into the nature of spirits; and those who should presume to penetrate further would only plunge into chimeras. No contrary proposition then is more certain and more clear than this, *there are bodies*: it is therefore a first truth suggested to our minds by Nature and common sense; for, in attempting either to prove or destroy it, we cannot produce a proposition more clear, or more evident.

56.
having the qualities of first truths.

We may add, that this truth is likewise possessed of the two last qualities which essentially accompany first truths; for it has been so universally received among mankind, in all ages and countries of the world, and by capacities of every degree, that those who should attack the evident certainty of the existence of bodies would not be found as one to a hundred; nay, not as one to a thousand, or even to a hundred thousand: for all men, as we shall not scruple to declare, being philosophers with respect to first truths,

truths, in a hundred thousand philosophers most assuredly one cannot be found to judge seriously, *that, he is not evidently certain whether there are bodies in the world;* and whether the objects he has every where before his eyes may not be spectres, or mere phantoms of the imagination.

In the business of life, a number still less will be found to act as if they were not evidently certain of what we would suppose might admit of a doubt. When, therefore, notwithstanding those three qualities of first truths, any speculative refiner shall pretend, that, by the power of reflection, he has discovered that we have no evident certainty of the existence of bodies, he will only prove, that by the power of reflection he has lost all title to common sense; as he disavows a first truth, dictated by the sentiments of Nature, and confirmed by the three qualities I have explained.

That which relates to the free-agency of man has likewise those three qualities. And, in fact, 1st, No opinion has ever been more universal among mankind. Is not that, said St. Augustine, what the most able professors inculcate in their instructions, what is equally proclaimed in the plains and cottages of the most simple shepherds, and repeated and supposed in every circumstance of civil society?

57.
Reflections that are contrary to those rules, are also contrary to common sense.

58.
Those rules shew the free-agency of man.

PART I.

2dly. If a few, by an affected singularity, or a sort of extravagant reflections, have attempted to maintain or imagine the contrary, does not their own conduct itself shew us the fallacy of their words, since they cannot have the same respect or esteem for perfidy as they have for fidelity? Those qualities, however, strictly speaking, would neither be estimable nor contemptible, were they to proceed from a principle of necessity, and not be the effects of free-will. We might like virtue and probity, as things convenient to us; but we could never consider them worthy of recompense and esteem. It is thus we like a watch, for the conveniency it affords in regularly marking the hours; and we cannot seriously think it worthy of esteem and reward, as we do a man who, on the most trying occasions, remains faithful to his duty.

59.
They cannot be
attacked by a
proposition more
clear.

Besides, what proposition, more clear and certain than this, *Man is truly free*, can be advanced in opposition to that truth? Can it be attacked by the following, *We might not be free, and make a voluntary choice sometimes of one thing, and sometimes of another, without perceiving it ourselves, and without experiencing any disposition different from that in which we actually are?* This proposition, I maintain, is not certainly more clear than that of, *I am sensible that I am free*; for, by the way of argument, the one cannot be destroyed

destroyed by the other, as they have no common principle between them, which may help to destroy the one and establish the other; whereas, in regard to sentiment, all men of sense and veracity are so far from being restrained by the subtle arguments of a philosopher on the subject, that the more they shall reflect on the matter, the more they will laugh at the sophistry of the philosopher.

Again, will any person imagine that this truth, *I am free*, may be attacked by a proposition more clear, in the strength of the following argument, on which some people seem to lay a considerable stress: *As man always necessarily inclines his will to what he judges the best, he cannot incline it to what he judges not to be so good?* But this second proposition, far from being so clear and certain as the first, is a perpetual source of discussions and enquiries among men of the most subtle capacity.

All must readily allow, that the will, at least sometimes, is inclined to one object rather than to another, though one be not better than the other; as when of two guineas it takes one rather than the other, without perceiving any cause of preference in either. The mind will again be puzzled to distinguish a *better* that is present and less durable, from a *better* that is to come and more lasting; a *better* according to the senses, from a *better* according to reason; a

PART I.

better independent of the action of free-will, from a *better* that is always found in the action itself of the will, which actually exercises its freedom: so that the will is always found to follow what is best as to itself; because the will itself makes the best by its own choice, in inclining to what pleases it most, but which is better for no other reason but because it is pleased to prefer it to any other object.

60.
The three qualities of first truths united to support this.

Whatever, therefore, may be advanced in opposition to the judgement of mankind, with respect to the free-agency of man, it will not be a principle more clear, more plausible, more interesting and natural to the human mind, than the sentiment of liberty or free-will. This moreover is found diffused among all men, in every age and country of the world. All men, in the conduct of life, act in conformity to this opinion: it is therefore a first truth, because it possesses the three essential qualities of one. Wherever then those three qualities are found united, there we shall infallibly find so many first truths dictated by common sense, and by the very sentiments of Nature.

With regard to that species of first truths which enables us to judge that mere chance could never form a work such as the world in general, the human body in particular, or even a watch that regularly marks the hours, some philosophers pretend that

that this judgement is far from being an incontestable truth, and consequently from being a first truth. They reason thus:

Nature, say they, teaches us, that in an infinite number of possible combinations is contained the particular combination of parts; whence results the formation of the world, of the human body, or of a watch: it is not therefore impossible but this combination may have been effected by chance, since it is as possible as any other combination that chance might have effectually produced.

I answer, It is by no means true that Nature leaves us to judge that, without the assistance of any intelligence, and by mere chance alone, one of the preceding combinations is possible: it is not, I say, Nature that leads us to such a judgement, but the wanton efforts of a giddy imagination, that perplexes itself unreasonably with objects in which the mind loses itself, and which are evidently beyond the reach of our limited capacity. 1st. What precise idea have we in the word *chance*? None; unless it be that chance is an unknown cause: and to judge of the effects that may be produced by an unknown cause, is to judge of a chimera. 2dly. To judge, moreover, of what is or is not possible in an *infinite combination* (which, by its very infinity, surpasses the reach of our understanding) is another chimera,

61.
Particular objection with regard to the effects of chance.

PART I.

as we shall make more fully appear in the chapter of *infinity*, or of *the possibility of beings*. But what is manifestly within the reach of our capacity? It is that which Nature has placed in the minds of all men who have not laboured to give the lye to her sentiments: she informs them that a machine like that of the world in general, of a human body in particular, or only of a clock or watch, is a combination which it is impossible seriously to attribute to any other cause but some intelligence; so that it is impossible for me to suppose that a sensible man thinks otherwise than I do of those matters.

62.
Common sense
ought to decide
between philo-
sophers.

Should it be urged, after this state of the question, that a philosopher seriously thinks possible what is considered by me as impossible, I insist, that in this particular he overleaps the bounds of reason. In such a contrariety of opinions, what judge is to decide whether the character of a sensible man belongs to the philosopher, or to me? I am persuaded that I shall be justified by the sentiments of all mankind, except a very few, who lose and perplex themselves in endeavouring to find a possibility where the rest of mankind can discern none. It is therefore the business of the philosopher to prove to me, that rational nature resides only in him, and a few of the same stamp, whilst it is unknown to all the rest of mankind. He advances subtle arguments; but

but those arguments, after they have been considered with all the attention he requires, have not the least effect upon the minds of others: they only serve to convince us more fully, that there is in rational nature something more sensible than extravagant arguments carried beyond the sentiment of Nature; a sentiment common to all, which tells us, that first principles, or first truths, cannot be attacked by propositions more clear and more convincing than they are themselves. This shall be further confirmed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER VIII.

That the certainty of first truths is not weakened by those subtle arguments with which some people attempt to oppose them.

WITH respect to the subject here treated of, certain objections have been proposed, similar to those already taken notice of, and which have appeared difficult to be explained: as they relate, however, to points that cannot be seriously doubted, they only shew the limits of the human capacity, and the weakness of our imagination, but do not in the least alter the truth of what I have laid down. Numbers of
argu-

63.
Doubts, with respect to things evident, only shew that the mind is limited,

PART I.

arguments are proposed, that confound ours, and still neither make, nor should make, any impression on common sense; because they are illusions, the falsehood of which may be readily discovered by the unerring sentiment of Nature, though it cannot always be demonstrated by a regular analysis of our thoughts. The reason of this has been already hinted, and is as follows: Similar difficulties always include some part of the idea of *infinite*, in which our minds are, and naturally must be, lost: therefore, nothing is more rational than to acknowledge our ignorance of such matters; as nothing is more ridiculous than the vain confidence of certain men, who affect a kind of triumph because we can make no reply to objections which we must, if we are rational men, consider as incomprehensible to our understanding. Thus, no person has ever yet been able, with clearness and precision, to answer the trite argument made use of to prove that, as the space of a foot is composed of parts which may be reckoned infinite, it would require infinite time to compute those parts. We have, in the recesses of our mind, a certain disposition of sentiment and experience, that enables us to form an evident judgement with respect to this matter, notwithstanding all the sophistical arguments that might seem capable of suspending it: a thing therefore does not remain less evident because

because it is opposed by perplexing difficulties, and disputed by some philosophers.

CHAP. VIII.

Sceptics have disputed all knowledge, and rejected every certainty whatever, even that of our existence. Should we therefore doubt whether we exist, think, or have any idea of pleasure or pain? Should we doubt of any other truths, equally evident, because those philosophers are pleased to make puzzling and frivolous objections? What should we say to a person who would attempt to prove that we do not exist, because it is impossible for us to conceive the origin of our existence? Such, however, are nearly the arguments of some modern philosophers against those truths that are most strongly asserted by common sense.

64.
The difficulties of sceptics have made no impression.

I find it disputed, whether I am evidently certain of the existence of other beings besides myself; whether I am surrounded by bodies; whether a clock that shews the hours regularly, or whether the machine of the universe, or that of each of the animals that subsist in it, might not have been the work of chance; whether all men might not deceive me in things which they unanimously relate; whether I have not existed as I am for a long succession of ages, of which I may have lost the remembrance. I see these points debated by philosophers: yet, however great they may be as philosophers, after they have

65.
The answer suggested by common sense against certain philosophers.

PART I.

have stated and supported the reason of their doubts, I sometimes say within myself, that I am at a loss how to answer their sophistical refinements; but that I have seen men shut up as lunatics for less extravagant notions.

I enquire among other men of different ages, countries, and constitutions; and I find them all equally persuaded, that no rational man can seriously form the doubts I have related. I consult the conduct and actions of all men, and even of those whose arguments seem to oppose the opinion of mankind; and I do not discover one who has ever been restrained, in the most important affairs, by any doubt of the existence of other beings beside himself; of his having a body, or not; or whether we might believe a man who should relate that, in a certain country, he had seen a watch formed by the mere effect of chance. I see no people in the world who think or act according to the opinions of this singular species of philosophers: I cannot therefore believe that they assert them seriously, but merely for the pleasure of advancing new subtleties, and affording fresh amusement to the wits of the age; for, after their arguments have been examined and made known, the sentiments of mankind were not changed in that particular.

All

All men however, at least with respect to some first principles, are as much philosophers, and as much to be credited, as either Plato, Des Cartes, or Locke; for there is then no occasion for argument: the business is, only to be convinced of a simple matter of fact, that is, of the necessity they naturally experience of judging clearly such a thing on such a subject; that there exist, for example, other beings beside me.

Aristotle, with all his reasoning and philosophy, is not more perfectly convinced that he exists and thinks, than a man of the most common and simple understanding; neither is he more firmly persuaded that he is not the only being in the world, &c. In those matters, where knowledge acquired by reason and argument is necessary, and where particular reflections, that suppose experiments not made by every person, are required, a philosopher is more to be credited than another man; but in an affair of manifest experience, and of a sentiment immediately obvious to the first motions of the soul, and common to all mankind, all men in this respect become philosophers; or their evidence, with regard to the truth, is at least as well founded as if they were such in reality: so that, as to the first principles of Nature and common sense, when a philosopher is opposed to the rest of

66.

All are philosophers with respect to first truths.

67.

There is no need of argument.

PART I.

of mankind, he is a philosopher opposed to a hundred thousand other philosophers, because they are as fully persuaded as he is of the first principles of our knowledge.

68.

Some philosophers are, in certain articles, less to be believed than the people.

I say further, that the common race of mankind is more to be credited in those points than many philosophers; because the former have not endeavoured to strain or distort the sentiments and opinions with which Nature universally inspires all men.

69.

The attention which the common sentiment of nature deserves.

Every philosopher should therefore maturely consider the strength of the sentiment of Nature, in order to make it the basis and general test of every truth; for it is equally impossible, either to judge that the sentiment of Nature is contrary to any rule of truth, or that any rule of truth has not the sentiment of Nature itself for its origin and foundation.

70.

First truths have not an equal degree of force in the evidence.

Though, of the different kinds of first truths, some are of an evidence either a little more or less powerful with us than others, this however does not prevent their being all really evident, as they are sufficiently clear to determine our reason, naturally, infallibly and necessarily to particular opinions, with regard to particular matters, which are within the reach of all human capacity.

In

In fact, as the first rule of truth universally acknowledged by all, that is, the internal sentiment of our own perception, derives all its force from Nature, wherever the sentiment of Nature is found, there also will be found a true evidence and a necessary rule of truth; so that, though a greater degree of light will make a truth more obvious and striking, it will not, however, make it more certain.

CHAP. VIII.

It is therefore Nature, and the sentiment of Nature, that we must acknowledge to be the source and origin of all true principles; whether they are accompanied by a greater or less degree of light: for, to imagine that Nature conducts us right when she holds out a stronger light to us, but that she may lead us wrong when she determines us to a judgement the evidence of which is less striking, would be to suspect that she might lead us to falsehood one way or another; and we should neither know what we are ourselves, what we think, nor what we ought to think.

77.
The sentiment
of Nature is
their source.

CHAPTER IX.

Why common sense is not equally found in all men.

72.
Common sense
degenerates in
some.

AS Nature has made all men what they are, we might suppose that they should all possess an equal portion of common sense: in some, however, we find it obscured, disfigured, contradicted, and entirely, or at least considerably, degenerated. The sentiment of Nature that enables us to think and judge, may be compared to the sentiment that prompts us to love and desire. Is it not a natural sentiment that inspires parents with an affection for their children, and urges them to promote their welfare? I never yet knew any person that doubted this: nevertheless, this natural sentiment is altered or extinguished in some parents; but this does not prevent it from being a sentiment of Nature. In like manner, though we should find some persons to have notions different, with respect to first truths, from all the rest of mankind, this is no proof that the ideas of the latter are not sentiments inspired by Truth and Nature.

73.
Nature some-
times forms
monsters.

Though Nature is regular in her works, men, however, may be found defective or imperfect in
some

some things : and as, in the external structure or form, abortions and monsters sometimes appear ; the same may be likewise seen in the dispositions of the mind.

CHAP. IX.

We must not however imagine, that Nature alone forms those monsters or abortions with respect to the dispositions of the soul ; there is greater reason to believe that men disfigure themselves, by effacing the impressions of Nature, and obscuring the lights she has placed in them, and this through an abuse of the liberty she likewise bestows upon them.

74.
Some men
make monsters
of themselves.

This may, and does actually happen by various means. Sometimes extravagant curiosity prompts us to the pursuit of things that are beyond the reach of our capacity and talents, and we plunge into errors and darkness : at other times, inspired by the ridiculous vanity of distinguishing ourselves from other men, we deviate from their opinions in things of which they are naturally as capable of judging as we are ; so that, by renouncing their sentiments, we at the same time abandon common sense. On some occasions we are led away by the prejudice of a faction or sect, that prevails for a while in some countries ; as hath been the case with the Sceptics and Platonics, who, intoxicated with the notion of being the superior wits of the age, boasted that they alone could comprehend what is in reality incomprehen-

75.
Various causes
of this disorder.

PART I.

fible to every rational mind: they looked down with pity on the rest of mankind, whilst those, on the other hand, more justly lamented their illusions. On another occasion, dazzled by a long and pompous train of consequential truths, we are blind to the falsehood of our own principle. Sometimes, in fine, a secret interest influences us to confound and disfigure the sentiments of Nature, in order to free ourselves from the troublesome suggestions of certain truths; for, in short, such is the imperious ascendant of the will in the mind, that it can substitute the most unaccountable sentiments in the place of the best established and most plausible knowledge.

We must therefore suppose, that the Author of Nature has imprinted on the minds of all men whatever is necessary for the attainment of truth, as far as it is consistent with their nature; but, having given them free-will, on the other hand, they have so much abused that privilege by various excesses, that they have changed the order of their constitution, and vitiated the organs of their senses. Experience indeed shews us, that on those depend the various operations of the mind, and consequently the accuracy and perfection of our judgement. It is thus, probably, that men have, in a manner, belied their nature, more or less, some one way, and some another: hence have proceeded extravagant notions, idle prejudices,

dices, false views, errors of the mind, and all the various injuries that common sense has suffered in each of us.

Those in whom common sense is entirely altered, are such as we call *absolute fools*; those in whom it has suffered but little alteration in things of trifling consequence, are perfect; or *men of sense*; those in whom it is changed with respect to some particular customs generally established, constitute the characters that have been for some time styled *originals*; those in whom it is remarkably altered in regard to some particular points, are such of whom we say, *they are madmen in that particular*: and we say right; for, were they the same in every thing else, they would be in a perfect state of insanity.

Nothing, however, is more common than such characters; and, what is very mortifying to humanity, we often meet with them in men otherwise possessed of eminent qualities: so that experience daily shews us a species of fool that is a man of genius, another very learned, and others more frequently who are the best natured men in the world.

It is not improper to observe, that, in the midst of all the various follies, and alterations of truth and common sense, we rarely find two errors exactly similar; unless in some particular person,

76.
Various names
given to the va-
rious alterations
of common
sense.

77.
They are to be
found accompa-
nied by good
qualities.

PART I.

78.
The human
mind always
preserves prin-
ciples of truth.

who through affectation or contagion adopts or contracts the error of another.

But, in this infinite diversity of errors and disorders in common sense, from whatever causes they may have proceeded, (which I do not undertake to examine or prove, as systems are of no weight with solid minds) experience however shews us that principles, or first truths, remain in the minds of all men. But how are they to be known? They are apparent when we see great numbers, of various ages, tempers, conditions and countries, coincide in one opinion with regard to a thing of which they are all equally capable of judging.

I may fairly conclude, that I am a better judge, and think more justly, than others who are of a different opinion from me with respect to matters of which they have had much less experience than I; but, where the advantages are equal on both sides, it is impossible that a man should be right in his opinion, when a hundred others, who are equally capable of judging, think differently of the matter. This rule is the more infallible, as the subject to be decided depends less upon argument, and approaches nearer to first principles and the knowledge common to all mankind.

CHAPTER X.

An elucidation of some difficulties that might remain with respect to the species of First Truths which are derived from common sense.

THE difficulties that might remain with regard to what has been advanced, are confined to two or three.

1. The common opinion of mankind in general is, that the sun is no more than two feet in diameter; so that, had they been left to themselves, or had not Philosophy undeceived them, all men would conclude those to be the true dimensions of the sun.

79.
Error with respect to the dimensions of the sun.

We answer, It is not true that the common opinion of those who are capable of judging of the sun's dimensions is, that it is no more than two or three feet diameter. The most ignorant people are guided, in this matter, by the major part, or the whole body, of philosophers and astronomers, rather than by the testimony of their own eyes: and, indeed, we have never known any person, even among those of the lowest station, seriously maintain that it was wrong to imagine the sun larger than a globe of four feet diameter. But, should any one be found so ig-

PART I.

norant as to contest this point, the dispute might be terminated in a moment by a simple experiment; it would be sufficient to direct the eyes of the opponent to a common object, which appears greater or less, in proportion to the distance it is from the sight. The most stupid men, therefore, are convinced their eyes deceive them with regard to the true dimensions of objects; so that, while they judge, without reflection, that the sun is four feet in diameter, they are all ready, on the least reflection, to conclude that their first judgement is subject to error. This first judgement, therefore, is not a sentiment of Nature: on the contrary, it is universally opposed by the purest sentiment of rational nature, which is that of reflection. This answer may suffice for all the difficulties that may be drawn from popular errors, which are manifestly contradicted by the evidence of reflection, reason, or experience.

80.
Whether truth
is calculated for
the bulk of the
people.

2. It is a maxim with men of superior wisdom, and as it were a first truth in morality, *That truth is not calculated for the multitude*: it does not therefore appear judicious to establish a rule of truth on what is considered as true by the majority of mankind.

81.
Maxims are sub-
ject to excep-
tions.

I answer, That a precise and metaphysical truth is not to be governed by common maxims, the truth of which is liable to different exceptions.

We

We have an instance of this in the maxim which declares that *the voice of the people is the voice of God*: this is far from being universally true, though it is nearly as often verified as that here objected, that *the truth is not calculated for the multitude*: and with regard to First Truths, the subject here treated of, the latter maxim should be considered as absolutely false.

In fact, if first truths were not universally diffused in the minds of all men, it would be impossible to make them agree in any thing, as they would have different principles in all matters: so that their most just and candid arguments would only serve to foment a spirit of falsehood, lying, misunderstanding, and contradiction, among them, as they must be guided by false principles. When, therefore, it is a just saying, that *truth is not for the multitude*, it means a species of truth which cannot be well known without study, capacity, and experience: and those are circumstances not suitable to the multitude; neither have they any occasion for them in the discovery of first truths, which always carry full conviction to the generality of minds, whether learned or ignorant; for, to be convinced of them, there is no occasion for any argument; to think only, is sufficient.

32.
Were the first truths not known to all, we should agree about nothing.

3. It

PART I.

83.
The difficulty
of discovering an
universal opinion.

3. It is objected, that the common or universal sentiment, though it should be an infallible rule of truth, would however be useless in practice, on account of the difficulty or impossibility of knowing which is the greater number; as nobody is capable of visiting the whole universe, and ascertaining the opinion of each man in particular upon the same subject, in order to be convinced whether they think alike.

84.
How this may
be discovered.

I answer, that with regard to first truths, or first principles, if we can seriously doubt whether they are admitted by the majority, we may also rationally doubt whether it is a first principle, or a first truth. Secondly, When a truth appears to us a first truth, it is so in fact, if we see it received as such without being contradicted, or without having been opposed, so as to persuade the majority to alter their sentiments. Thirdly, The common sentiment of nature, which is a first rule of truth, wants not to be confirmed by consulting the opinion of each individual: it is verified in itself, because it is evident and to be found in every man; so that, if some have ventured to dispute it, they have been contradicted by numbers incomparably greater.

The best answer, however, that can be made to this third objection, is the sentiment of Nature itself on the matter; and whoever refuses to submit to that, previously contradicts
the

the common sentiment diffused among all men. In fact, what could be said to a man who, on the pretence of not having seen all mankind, should imagine that there are some perhaps who do not wish to be happy, and who can live without either eating or drinking? The difficulty would carry the answer with it, or rather excuse us from giving any.

CHAPTER XI.

Whether the common metaphysical axioms are first truths, and of what nature.

CERTAIN common axioms are usually given as general principles of truth: for example, *two and two make four*; or, *the whole is greater than a part*; or, *it is impossible that a thing should at the same time be and not be*. I shall not, at present, examine whether these are first truths in the sense of being the first that occur to the mind. I must however observe, that these axioms are not principles of every truth, as they do not help to prove any external truth; that is, the certain and true existence of any thing distinct from us. These axioms, therefore, are only internal truths; that is to say, a mere conformity of ideas founded

35.
Common
axioms are not
principles of
every truth,

on

PART I.

86.
but of internal
truths only.

on this principle; *such a thing is such a thing, or such an idea is that idea, and no other.*

In fact, this truth or proposition, *two and two make four*, gives us no knowledge of any object distinct from our minds; and, were there but one man in the world, it would be always true that two and two make four: for this very proposition, *two and two are four*, tells us nothing, in fact, but that, when the idea of *two* is repeated, or taken twice, we give it the name of *four*: so that *four* is only *two taken twice*, as *two* is nothing else but *one taken twice*; which is not really, in any respect, a first external truth that shews the conformity of our thought with any object distinct from our actual thought, but only the same thought, or idea, which, being taken twice, has received a new name, for the conveniency of the language; for to say *two and two make four*, is saying no more than that *two taken twice* is *two taken twice*, which is what is called *four*.

In like manner, to say that *the whole is greater than a part*; is likewise *but an internal truth*; for a whole is a greater quantity conceived, in which we distinguish many lesser quantities, termed *parts*. To say, therefore, *the whole is greater than any of its parts*, is only saying that *a greater quantity is a greater quantity, and not another quantity that is less*; or, *such an idea is such an idea, and no other*. This plainly shews the nature of those kinds

kinds of first principles, which are, strictly speaking, nothing but logical or internal truths, and mere connections of ideas; but such as point out no truth with respect to the existence of things; for those axioms would be equally true, though nothing existed distinct from us. Did we know more than those abstracted truths, we should possess no other but abstracted knowledge, and connections of ideas, such as the science and demonstrations of Geometry. (49, 50.)

This may serve to shew the fallacy of a maxim frequently advanced by some men esteemed for their depth and penetration: they say, *that there is no truth but in Geometry*. It is plain that those very profound minds are lost in their profundity, and do not well understand themselves. In fact, as demonstrations of Geometry are nothing but internal truths, that is, connections of ideas; it is manifestly false, that those connections of ideas are no where else to be found but in objects or subjects of Geometry. Similar and equally evident may be discovered with respect to every subject within the reach of the human mind, and of which we have clear ideas.

Knowledge may be also acquired with regard to the existence of things distinct from us; from which consequences may be deduced as certain as geometrical demonstrations.

37.
Every subject has truths demonstrated as those in Geometry.

We

PART I.

88.

A thing is not proved by shewing that it includes no contradiction.

We may further observe how erroneous it is in those who pretend to prove, that a certain object really and truly exists distinct from us, by saying *that no contradiction can be shewn* in what they advance relative to the existence of that object. It is indeed enough to inform us, that they have advanced nothing against an internal truth, which solely consists in shewing a just connection of ideas; but it is not enough to demonstrate, that what they have advanced agrees with an external truth; for the existence of an object separate from us, is not proved by a mere conformity of ideas, that are only within ourselves: it can be proved only by the sentiment which Nature has placed in all men, or at least in the greater part of them, to enable them to judge of the existence of objects that are equally comprehensible to them all; so that, when we are to judge of an object existing separate from us, we cannot be determined but by that *sentiment*, or by some consequence thence deduced. This does not exclude the testimony of the senses: on the contrary, common sense convinces us that the testimony of the senses is a rule of external truth in the circumstances we have related.

89.

There is no contradiction in saying that we have no certainty of the existence of bodies.

There is, however, no contradiction in saying that we have no evident certainty of the existence of bodies: this is no contradiction, I say, it is only a folly; because, without denying *that an*

idea

idea is that idea, which only constitutes the contradiction, we deny the truth of a judgement which nature and common sense dictate to all men: so that a Philosopher who imagines he has attained even to every external truth, because he has formed a long chain of propositions and ideas that follow in regular succession, and among which there appears no contradiction, unless he likewise admits for first truths those with which nature and common sense inspire mankind relative to the existence of things, may be aptly called *a species of fool that is an excellent logician*. Inventors of systems, considered merely as such, are no more than excellent logicians.

CHAPTER XII.

Whether there are no other first truths but those of which the idea is common to all men.

WE may, I think, distinguish two sorts of first truths that are external: the one, of which I have been hitherto treating, comprehends the first truths that extend to every situation and disposition of men in general, who have arrived at the age and use of reason: the other includes the first truths particularly attached to certain

90.
Two sorts of
first external
truths.

PART I.

certain dispositions or situations of life; because they suppose particular knowledge, experience, or practice, the equal acquisition of which being once admitted, Nature does not fail to dictate to them all a common opinion with regard to certain objects.

91.
A taste for the
arts is a sort of
first truth.

Thus in all arts and sciences a taste is formed, which is properly *common sense* with respect to those objects; as the taste with regard to style and criticism in classical learning; that of design and colouring in painting, of singing and harmony in music, of cadence and a graceful air in dancing, and of penetration and great designs in the science of politics and negotiation.

92.
It is relative, and
not absolute.

As these sorts of first truths suppose particular situations in which all men are not concerned, they must be admitted but *relatively*, and only with respect to situations of time, country, and other circumstances, which always imply something arbitrary.

93.
Those sorts of
first truths have
none that are
anterior.

In admitting however these observations, nothing opposes our giving the name of *first truths*, in an extensive sense, though not with exact precision, to all opinions which Nature generally suggests to the greater part of mankind with regard even to particular subjects, when those opinions can neither be proved nor attacked by opinions more clear and certain as to the matter in question. On this sense therefore what I have related of the taste
for

for the arts and sciences may be considered as first truths: and such are those I shall explain at the end, and in the Fifth Part of this Treatise.

It would be useless, therefore, to attempt to prove that there is a difference of style in certain compositions: it would be, I say, useless to seek to prove this to those who have no taste for style; or to demonstrate the justness of cadence and measure to persons who have no knowledge of dancing or music: but by practice in those arts they are qualified to judge of them; and whatever is decided by the majority of them, will infallibly be the true taste; for, as we are more certain of what is seen by many eyes than what is seen by one only, we are also more sure of what is pronounced true by many, than what is thought so by a single person. Therefore, what men most commonly think of things of which they are equally qualified to judge, before any arguments are used, is properly *common sense*; that is, what the sentiment of wise Nature has made most common.

PART I.

CHAPTER XIII.

Application of the rule of common sense in order to discover in what true beauty consists.

A Particular treatise has been recently published on the nature of *the beautiful*. The author has enriched the work with a variety of ingenious and subtle reflections: I fear, however, that in several places he gives, as explanations, things which require to be explained themselves. What I have to offer on this subject, may be, I imagine, more fully verified: but my ideas, in order to be relished, will have occasion for particular examples, by which they shall be followed; and those will make them more intelligible than they might at first appear.

94.
In what the
beautiful consists.

What is termed *beautiful*, or beauty, seems to me to consist in that *which is at the same time the most common and most rare in things of the same species*; or, to express myself in another manner, it is *that particular form, the most common of all the particular forms to be met with in the same species of things*. This sort of paradox requires explanation; but the more we examine it, the more it will become plausible.

As

As an example of things of the same species, let us take human faces. It is evident that, in this species, we find a number almost infinite of different particular forms, one of which constitutes beauty, whilst the rest, however numerous they may be, constitute what is *not beauty*, but *deformity* or *ugliness*. I say then, that, among the numerous particular forms of deformity, none of them include so many faces formed after their model, as there are formed after that particular cast which constitutes beauty: so that, in fifty faces, there may be perhaps twelve or fifteen particular different forms, among which there shall be but one that constitutes beauty; and this is what makes *beauty* the most rare form, I mean, with respect to so many other different forms: but this particular form shall have eight or ten different faces formed entirely, or almost entirely, after its own model; whereas each of the twelve or fifteen other particular forms shall have only two or three faces after its particular model, or perhaps but one, of such deformity: and this again makes beauty the most common form.

The same principle is verified, and becomes perhaps more apparent still, in what constitutes the beauty of each part of the face. If we examine the foreheads or noses of fifty persons, we shall perhaps find ten well-proportioned and

95.
How it is rare
and common.

PART I.

forty otherwise: the ten will appear as if they were formed after the same model; whereas, out of the forty that are ill-shaped, not above two or three will be found of the same form, but almost all different models; one shall be too long, another too short; one with too great a rise or hump, another flat; one swelling above, another below; one pointed upwards, another spreading downwards; one too broad, another too narrow, &c. So that, as I have said, in forty ill-shaped foreheads or noses, we shall scarcely find any of similar disproportion, or deformity; whereas, in the ten foreheads or noses which I suppose well-shaped, the same kind of conformity and proportion will appear. In examining also the part that constitutes a particular deformity, we shall find it is what rarely occurs in human faces; and the less frequently such a part appears, the greater must be the deformity; whereas, the part that forms a beauty is incomparably more common than any particular part whatever which constitutes a deformity.

It will be perhaps said, that it would follow from these principles, that all beautiful faces must resemble each other, though it is evident that there are different beauties which have no resemblance. But we must observe, that, however beautiful a face may be, its parts are never equally and perfectly beautiful: were they all to be

be so, even to the most minute, then all fine faces would actually have a resemblance: and indeed, among all the particular forms, there is not one that makes men resemble each other more than beauty; and those persons, whom, from their resemblance, we are frequently apt to mistake for one another, approach nearer to the nature of beauty than deformity. People are never known to be mistaken in distinguishing between two ugly faces, or deformed persons. Painters never find it less difficult to take a likeness than when they are painting persons that are ugly: and it always proves a more painful task to draw very handsome persons, particularly if they are young; for the complexion being then more delicate and beautiful, and more suitable to greater numbers, it is more difficult, in a portrait, to hit off what distinguishes the one from the other; whereas, by age, faces are lengthened or contracted, withered or wrinkled, a thousand different ways, in proportion as they fall off from the form of beauty: and those differences which constitute ugliness, lessen the trouble of painters, and enable them to give a more characteristic likeness to their portraits.

If we suppose that there are perfect beauties, though of forms entirely different, it will be found, that either the supposition is false, or that those different forms of beauty have always

96.
Handsome people resemble each other more than those that are ugly.

PART. I.

more affinity between them than each of them has with any one of those that constitute deformity. Besides, among those perfect beauties, one will be preferred to the other, only by the part which is, at the same time, the most common, and most rare, in the sense I have mentioned; otherwise the preference would be arbitrary, as it happens in different ages and countries. We look upon blue eyes, at present, to be the most beautiful; black were most admired among the Romans: *Spectandum nigris oculis*, "remarkable for fine black eyes," as Horace has it.

27.
Whether beauty
consists in proportion.

But, in order to illustrate the matter more fully, let us examine what is generally said upon the subject, when it is asserted, that *beauty consists in proportion*. What, I would ask, is the nature of this proportion? From what standard is it taken? Some persons imagine they solve the difficulty by saying, that the proportion which constitutes beauty, is drawn from necessity, and the use for which each part of the body is designed. Though there is something ingenious, and perhaps just, in this idea, it is however liable to many discussions and rules that might be found arbitrary. We all allow, for example, that a very large mouth is a blemish in the face: I do not however see, that it is in any respect contrary to the necessity and use for which the mouth is intended: we speak and eat

at least as well with a very large mouth as with a small mouth, or one of middling size. CHAP. XIII.

To find, therefore, some fixed rule as to what is called *beauty*, we must, I imagine, recur to what I have advanced, that beauty consists in the particular form which is most common among other particular forms found in things of the same species.

We may judge of this from what constitutes ugliness. Nothing is more horrible than a monster; and yet it is a monster for no other reason, only because it has nothing in common with the human figure and form. By a contrary reason, therefore, what is most common in the human form and figure, is that which makes beauty; a form and quality the most opposite to what constitutes monsters.

98.
Excessive ugliness is what is most rare.

If beauty, moreover, which is generally said to consist in the true proportion of the parts of the face, were not founded on what is most common among men, whence could painting and sculpture have drawn rules of proportion relative to the parts of the body? How could men have conceived, that a forehead should be of such a length, breadth, or prominence, if any other but the just proportion were found most common? Would not the rules of painting have been merely arbitrary, or rather would they ever have been rules? The size or stature

99.
Proportion is taken from what is most common.

PART I.

of a man, to be fine, according to rule, should be of such a height, five feet and a half, for example, or six feet: so that, should a skilful painter be desired to make the finest figure possible of a man of a natural size, he would not go beyond six feet, which I suppose prescribed by the rules of his art. Experience indeed will demonstrate, that of fifty persons we shall find a greater number of the height of six feet, or near six feet, than of seven or eight, five or four. Thus the proportion of the parts of the body is primitively derived from the height or stature; so that such a height or size requires such a length for the face, arms, legs, &c. and deformity will be increased, in proportion as it differs from the most common standard, and lessened, the nearer it approaches to the same; by which the very rules themselves must be governed.

100.
Whether beauty
is the form to
which we are
most accus-
tomed.

If it be said, that rules would have been always established according to what is usually pleasing to the eye, I answer, that what usually pleases the eye is exactly the most common and most rare form in the sense I have explained it. Should it be added, that true beauty is that which is approved by connoisseurs, I would desire, that mankind may first agree who are to be reckoned connoisseurs. This will not be so easily done perhaps: but, when it is once determined,
the

the taste and opinion of connoisseurs will be always found in favour of the form we have mentioned; that is, the most common among other particular forms. This would incline me to suspect, that the form which constitutes beauty is that, in fact, to which our eyes are most accustomed. Should it be thence concluded, that beauty, at this rate, must be, in a great measure, arbitrary, I doubt whether such a conclusion would be erroneous: it would, at least, exempt us from seeking an essential and real character of beauty which we have not yet been able to discover.

Whatever may be the state of the matter, if the opinions of mankind should be found nearly divided with regard to an object which one party thought handsome and the other ugly, I would imagine, that there could be no more real beauty, or ugliness, on one side than the other; and that it must absolutely pass for a beauty relative to the taste of some, but arbitrary in itself, and with respect to the bulk of mankind.

When all men, therefore, appear divided into those of a fair complexion, and those of a black, and each of the two parties think their own colour the most beautiful, without altering their opinion after maturely weighing the matter, and making every observation possible, we must, in that case, say, that there is not more truth

on

101.
Beauty is arbitrary.

PART I.

on one side than the other, no more real beauty in the fairest than in the blackest complexion, nor in the faces of Europe than those of Africa, unless it is a beauty relative to each of the two parties or countries.

102.
A face that is
handsome in
Europe is not
so in Africa.

What has been said of complexion or colour is naturally applicable to every other particular quality of beauty. On these principles, when lips are esteemed handsome because they are small, or a nose is thought well-shaped because it is neither broad nor flat, we must say, if we would be just in our opinion, Those are fine lips for Europe, but not for Africa, where lips, to be handsome, must be extremely thick, and a nose short, broad, and flat. Should we pretend to ridicule the beauty of the inhabitants of Africa, they, and all the blacks, who are very numerous, will laugh, in their turn, at our species of beauty; and, in order to decide on which side the preference lies, we must appeal to the sense of the whole body of mankind.

103.
Whether the
Blacks have
less aversion to
White people
than the latter
have to them.

If it were true, as some persons pretend, that the blacks have not the same dislike to a fair complexion as we commonly have to theirs, it would then appear indubitable, that true beauty belongs to Europe and the neighbouring countries; especially as the blacks seem to be inferior in number to the whites,

What-

Whatever may be the case, if we suppose that true beauty is to be found in the world, it must incontestably be that form which is most common to all nations; and if particular people, through *prejudice*, and peculiar habits, will not at first concur in this opinion, time and reflection must at length incline them to the more numerous party, that is, to the side and opinion of Reason and Nature.

CHAR. XIII.

CHAPTER XIV.

Of the testimony of our senses, and in what manner it holds the place of a first truth.

THOUGH the exercise of our senses is so familiar to us, that it does not seem different from ourselves, we should not, however, be less scrupulous in our enquiries with regard to the rules of truth that may be thence drawn, since it is the subject of maxims which merit the greater degree of investigation, as they sometimes appear contradictory to one another.

For, on the one hand, when we are willing to give others the greatest proof that can be expected from us, with regard to the truth of a thing, we say, that we have seen it with our own eyes;

104.
The testimony
of the senses
should be examined.

PART I.

eyes; and, if they suppose that we have actually seen it, they must necessarily believe it: the testimony of the senses is therefore, in this respect, a first truth, as it holds the place of a first principle, no farther enquiry being desired, or even thought of. This is what is universally allowed.

105.
The senses are
deceitful.

On the other side, all likewise agree, that the senses are deceitful; and experience will not suffer us to doubt it. If we are, however, certain of a thing from our having seen it, how can the sense of seeing deceive us? or, if it can deceive us, how are we certain of a thing for having seen it?

106.
General rules
are not sufficient
to prevent the
error of our
senses.

The common answer to this difficulty is, that our sight and other senses may deceive us, when they are not exercised with the requisite conditions; that is, the organ must be sound, and the object at a proper distance. When those two rules, or conditions, are implied, they are generally thought sufficient. This, I think, however, is not saying much, or even enough; for where is the use of our adducing, as rules that justify and evince the testimony of our senses, those conditions which we cannot ourselves so far confirm as to know when we have truly found them?

107.
We are not cer-
tain that they
are sound.

What infallible rule is given to me to judge that the organs of my sight, hearing, and smelling,

ing, are actually found? We have an instance of a man who had seen objects of a certain colour for the space of twenty or thirty years; and, after a fit of sickness that brought a kind of film on his eyes, the same objects appeared to him of a quite different hue. Had this man a right, before his disorder, to be persuaded that the organs of his sight were perfectly sound? What happened to him in a certain space of time, and might have been the case with him all his life, may it not happen, and does it not actually happen, to many others? It is therefore true, that our organs do not give us a perfect certainty, unless when they are perfectly formed: but they are so only in perfect constitutions; and, as those are very rare, it follows, that there is scarce one of our organs but what is defective in some particular, and that none of our senses can afford us a first truth, so as to leave us nothing to seek beyond it.

Evident as this conclusion may seem, it does not however destroy another truth; which is, that we are certain of what we see. This contradiction, whether real or apparent, shews that something has been left unexplained; for one rational maxim cannot contradict another rational maxim. In order to clear up this, let us first distinguish what is of a more manifest and incontestable certainty in the matter.

No

108.
We are not the
less certain of
having seen
what we have
seen.

PART I.

109.
The actual sensation is a metaphysical certainty.

110.
We must not confound it with the remembrance we have of it.

111.
It is not simply an internal perception.

No person refuses to acknowledge, that the senses give us a certainty of actual sensation, which it is impossible to doubt; so that I have a sensible perception of such a colour, and such a sound, whenever an object actually strikes my eyes and ears.

It is proper to observe, that some people seem to confound this internal perception of an actual sensation with an internal perception nearly similar, which is not however a sensation, but a simple remembrance, or an idea strongly renewed, of a sensation: for example, when I call to mind, without the actual assistance of the senses, the most lively idea possible of the whiteness of paper, it seems evident that the perception of this idea, renewed by the memory, differs absolutely from the perception which I actually have of the whiteness of the paper when it is before my eyes, and I see it: however lively an imagination may be, it does not come up to the vivacity of an actual sensation.

Our sensations give us therefore an evident certainty of something more than a simple internal sensation: and this *more* is a modification, which, besides a particular vivacity of sentiment, impresses our minds with an idea of a being that actually exists distinct from us, and which we call body; that is, our sensations give us the certainty of the existence of bodies. I do

not

not speak here of what might happen on extraordinary occasions, by an effect of divine omnipotence in a preternatural manner; nor of what happens in sleep, and a phrenzy; for the impressions of a man who is awake, and in his senses, are evidently distinguished from all others.

But what do we infallibly learn, by our senses, of those bodies considered in the ordinary and natural order; and what rule of truth do they furnish us with, in order to judge of what the objects that strike us are in themselves? This is a matter, with respect to which perhaps we sometimes depend more than we ought on the testimony of the senses.

They may, in fact, persuade us that there are properties in corporeal things, capable of making a certain impression on us; and this is what is commonly called *a certain quality*. They are therefore infallible in assuring us, that there is in bodies a *quality*, which by the eyes gives me the sentiment of what I call *colour*; by the ears, of what I term *sound*, &c. but this knowledge is something very vague and imperfect, as may be seen in the subsequent reflections.

CHAP. XIV.

112.
What our senses
teach us of
bodies.

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CHAPTER XV.

In what our senses are not a rule of truth.

113.
Our senses do
not discover the
internal quality
of bodies;

FIRST; our senses afford us no evidence of the secret in which consists that disposition of bodies, termed *quality*; which makes such an impression on me; and which we have recently mentioned. I fully perceive, and even evidently, that there is in certain bodies a property that produces in me the idea of heat and gravity; but what this property really is in itself, is a thing that generally escapes my senses, and frequently even my reason: I have a glimmering idea only, that by a certain arrangement, and degree or kind of motion, in the most minute parts of that body, there is a conformity between that body and the impression it makes upon me. Thus I conjecture, that the power which the sun has of raising in me an idea of light, consists in a certain motion or impulse of small bodies, through the pores of the air, towards the retina of the eye: but as to this power in itself my eyes are perfectly blind, and my reason is almost as much in the dark.

114.
nor all their ex-
ternal proper-
ties;

2dly. The senses give us no evidence of an infinite number even of the exterior properties that are found in objects, and which surpass the sagacity

agacity of our sight, hearing, and smelling. This is evidently proved by microscopes, which, in objects of sight, have enabled us to discover an immense variety of external properties, that shew an equal difference in the internal parts, and form so many different qualities: more perfect microscopes would display to our view other properties, of which we have neither a perception, nor perhaps an idea.

3dly. The senses do not inform us of the precise impressions that are made on other men through their channel. As the impression made on the senses by corporeal qualities, depends on the disposition of our organs; and this disposition being nearly as various in men as their constitutions or faces; it naturally follows, that the same external quality must make so many different impressions of sensation in different men. We see daily instances of this with regard to the taste, sight, and feeling: the same wine produces in me a sensation of flatness or insipidity, and in another a sensation of a lively or brisk taste: I cannot therefore be assured, that any certain body will make exactly the same impression on any other person that it does on myself.

4thly. As reason and experience teach us that bodies suffer a continual motion and change, though frequently imperceptible in their most

115.
nor the impressions that bodies may make on other men;

116.
nor whether bodies preserve the same qualities from one day to another.

PART I.

minute parts, we cannot for a certainty judge, whether a body has, from one day to another, exactly the same quality or disposition to make the impressions on us it did before; for not only the body changes, but we change likewise. I may indeed perceive the change of impression; but whether it should be attributed to the object, or to me, is what I cannot know by the sole testimony of the organ of my senses. It may be observed, that this is one of the causes of the great uncertainty of the rules of physic: they are, it is true, founded on experience; but experience is never precisely the same with regard to different persons, or even with respect to the same person at different times.

117.
Error of Mr.
Le Clerc, with
respect to the
prerogative of
the sight.

I cannot, however, conceive why certain philosophers, like Mr. Le Clerc, attribute to some of the senses, and particularly to the sight, the privilege of being less capable of deceiving us than our other senses. The proof he adduces, surprises me still more: *it is*, says he, *because what I see makes a stronger impression on me than what I hear*. I doubt whether on this, as on many other occasions, he had himself a clear idea of his own assertions.

Does he pretend that I have a perception less certain, and less intimate, of the sound that strikes my ear, than of the colour which meets my eyes? In hearing the question, and distinguishing

guishing the words, the difficulty is fully explained.

CHAP. XV.

118.

How we are to give greater credit to what we see than what we hear.

His mistake was occasioned by a circumstance, or rather expression, daily used: it is, *that we give greater credit to what we see than what we hear said*. And this saying is, in fact, well founded: but does it imply, that the testimony of the sight is more perfect than that of the hearing? Far from it: I am as intimately, and as certainly, persuaded of a sound when I hear it, as of a colour when I see it. What then is the meaning of the maxim which Mr. Le Clerc adduces as a proof with regard to the certainty of the evidence of the senses? It is, that *I am more certain of a thing I have seen, than of a thing I have not seen*; for what I hear said, without being an eye-witness of it, is what I have not seen. When I simply hear a thing said, without seeing it, what strikes my senses at the moment are the words used in relating the affair passed; and I am then as certain that I hear the thing related, as I should be of seeing it if I had actually seen it: I have a right therefore to give as much credit to the evidence of my hearing, as to the testimony of my sight. The matter is so manifest, that, if Mr. Le Clerc should happen to read this, I am convinced he will himself be astonished at his mistake, and even be the first

PART I.

119.
The senses are
given only for
the common
conduct of life.

first to laugh at so egregious a blunder in a philosopher.

To return to the degree of certainty, and rule of truth, which we derive from our senses; we must allow, after what we have remarked, with the generality of philosophers, that the senses have been chiefly given to us for our conduct in life, and not with a view of procuring us knowledge for the mere gratification of curiosity: and, in the practice of life, we have a guide still superior to our senses, that is, reason, whose business it is to preside over the exercise of the senses, to employ them as subalterns, to hear their reports, and correct them when necessary.

CHAPTER XVI.

What may hold the place of first truths in the testimony of the senses.

120.
In what our
senses may afford
first truths.

THE first truths which our senses teach us, may be reduced chiefly to three heads. 1st, They always give a faithful report of things as they appear to them: 2dly, What appears to them is almost always conformable to the truth in matters proper for men in general to know, unless some rational cause of doubt presents itself: 3dly, It will be easy to discern when
the

the evidence of the senses is doubtful, by the CHAP. XVI.
reflections we shall point out.

The senses always give a faithful report of what appears to them: this is manifest, as they are necessary faculties that act by the necessary impression of objects, to which the reports of our senses is always conformable. The eye fixed upon a ship which is advancing with rapidity, reports that the shore appears to it to move the contrary way: this is what appears to the eye, I say, and what must appear to it; for in those circumstances the eye receives the same impressions as if the vessel and shore were advancing opposite ways: physical observations and the rules of optics both teach this. The senses therefore always inform the soul of what must, and necessarily does appear to them, according to the circumstances they are in.

121.
They always
report what
appears to
them.

If we view the matter in this light, the senses never deceive us; but we deceive ourselves by our own imprudence, with respect to the faithful report of our senses. Their fidelity does not consist in informing the soul of what is, but of what appears to them: it is her province to distinguish the real state of things from what they appear to them.

2dly. What appears to our senses is almost always conformable to truth, in circumstances relating to the conduct and general wants of

122.
What appears to
them is true in
things that re-
late to the com-
mon wants of
life.

PART I.

life. Thus, with regard to sustenance and nourishment, the senses sufficiently enable us to discern the objects made use of for that purpose; so that the more salutary a thing is to us, the greater, generally, is the number of different sensations that assist us to distinguish it; and what we cannot discern by their assistance, are not objects of our wants, but of our curiosity.

123.
They give us
but little infor-
mation of what
does not con-
cern those
wants.

Thus the senses do not commonly enable us to discern, in vinegar and cheese, the infinite numbers of mites and small worms with which they swarm: this however is a truth, but not one of those to which the senses owe their testimony. If we make them subservient to the attainment of such knowledge, it is an advantage we derive from them, that is, as it were, a work of supererogation to their function. Though they should therefore on such an occasion fail to inform us, or give us a wrong information, we ought not however to charge their testimony with falsehood, as it is not designed to inform us of the truth in those matters: it may be compared to a witness who should always speak true as to things within his knowledge, and advise us not to rely on what might appear to him in other articles about which he should be examined: if we are deceived on such an occasion, we are deceived by ourselves, and not by the evidence. The testimony, however, of the senses, is not the less a first truth in what relates

124.
They are not
the less rules of
truth.

relates to the wants and customs common to all men; unless, as I have added, the mind should conceive some reason for forming a doubt or an opinion contrary to what appears to them: in which case the following rules may be observed.

When our reason, otherwise instructed by certain facts and reflections, teaches us to judge manifestly contrary to what appears to our senses, their testimony on this occasion is by no means a rule of truth. Thus, though the diameter of the sun does not appear more than two feet, and that of the stars one inch; reason, however, taught by incontestable facts and evident knowledge, informs us that the sun and stars are infinitely larger than they appear.

2. When what actually appears to our senses, is contrary to what has appeared to them at other times; (for we are then apt to judge either that the object is not near enough, or that some change has happened in the object itself, or in our organs) as our reason on those occasions manifestly finds something to contradict what appears to our senses, it should avoid forming any determinate opinion, rather than risk a false decision.

Age and experience are of great assistance to us in discerning the testimony of the senses. A child who perceives his image in water, or a looking-glass, takes it for another child; but ex-

225.
Means of verifying the testimony of the senses.

226.
Age and experience are of great assistance in this matter.

PART I.

perience having prompted him to put his hand into the water, or on the mirror, he soon reforms the sense of sight by that of feeling; and he is convinced in time that there is no child where he fancied he saw one. The uncultivated native of a country where it never freezes, when he visits our regions, is apt to take a piece of ice for a stone; but experience having shewn him that ice will dissolve in water, he immediately corrects the sense of feeling by that of seeing.

127.
They are likewise confirmed by the testimony of different persons.

The third rule is, when that which appears to our senses is contrary to what appears to the senses of other men, whose organs, we have reason to believe, are as well formed as our own; so that, if my eyes make a report contrary to that of the eyes of all other men, I should rather believe my own particular sense mistaken than all their senses in general.

It is, in fact, impossible that a great number of men should have their organs erroneous as to a point in which they unanimously agree that it is mine which is defective; for Nature then would lead to error, and be wanting to herself.

CHAPTER XVII.

Elucidation of a difficulty proposed by some Philosophers, relative to the error of our senses, with respect to the extent of objects of sight.

SOME Philosophers have endeavoured to shew that our eyes are continually misleading us, because their report is generally false with regard to real extent or greatness; but I would willingly know from those philosophers, whether our eyes have been given to us for the absolute purpose of judging of the extent of objects. This is a speculation of little importance, perhaps; but it may however teach us that the extent of bodies is not the proper and peculiar object of the sight; and we must not charge it with an error, if it is defective in a point that is neither the object nor subject of its function.

Colours are the proper and peculiar object of the sight. It is true indeed, that, according to the different angles which the rays of light may accidentally form on the retina, the mind takes occasion to judge conjecturally with regard to the distance and extent of objects; but this conjectural judgment is not more essentially dependent on the sense of seeing than on that of hearing: the latter,
by

128.
Whether the eyes are calculated to judge of extent.

129.
Colours are their proper object.

PART I.

by its organ the ear, is likewise accustomed to give accidental evidence of the greatness and distance of sonorous bodies, which, in proportion to their extent and remoteness, produce in the air stronger or weaker undulations that strike the ear more forcibly. But, would it be therefore just to pretend to demonstrate the errors of our senses, because the ear does not enable us to judge exactly of the greatness and distance of objects? I think not; because on those occasions the ear does not perform the particular function of the organ of hearing, but supplies, as it were by accident, the function of feeling, to which it properly belongs to discover the greatness and distance of things.

130.
Greatness or
extent is the
proper object of
the feeling :

131.
the organ of
which resides
particularly in
the hands.

We may be convinced of this by universal practice. The true and established measures of greatness are inches, feet, hands, and cubits, which are taken from different parts of the human body: for, though the organ of feeling is dispersed over all parts of the body, it resides more sensibly in some than in others, and particularly in the hand, whose peculiar business it is to take the just dimensions of extent, in measuring, by its own proper extent, the greatness of the object to which it is applied; and, unless the report of the eyes, with respect to extent, is thus confirmed by the report of the hand, or of some other part that may be measured by, or proportioned to the hand, the report of the eyes, with

with regard to extent, must always be reckoned dubious. The visual sense is not, however, more deceitful on that account, nor its function more imperfect; because of itself, and by the direct institution of Nature, it extends only to the discovery of colours, and by accident alone to the discovery of the distance and greatness of objects. The senses, therefore, are less to be accused of deceiving us in the instance above mentioned, than our own false ideas of the proper function of each of our senses.

The testimony of the eyes and ears may sometimes, it is true, supply the place of the testimony of feeling, in what relates to the extent and distance of objects; but they are, as I have said, by no means a perfect evidence in themselves of extent, as the feeling gives a less suspicious testimony, or rather the most complete and just testimony we can possibly attain.

What idea, I would willingly enquire, is formed of absolute extent, by those who accuse the visual sense of not informing us exactly of the nature of this absolute extent?

Extent or greatness, say Geometricians, is no more than a proportion, relation, comparison, or judgement, by which we discover in what an object is more or less than another; but in all this we cannot find the idea of *absolute extent*, as *all extent is essentially relative*. We must not, therefore,

132.
The sight and hearing supply the office of the feeling in what relates to extent.

133.
There is no absolute extent.

PART I.

therefore, reproach our senses with having plunged us into an abyfs of errors because they do not make known absolute extent, which neither exists, nor can exist, and which even implies a contradiction in itself.

134.
Had there never
been but one
bowl in the
world, it would
neither be big
nor little.

In fact, had there never been but one bowl in the world, what answer could a rational being make, if he should be asked what was the absolute extent of that bowl? It would be impossible for him to give any; and he must see no sense in the proposition, unless he should be prompted to enquire, In relation, or in comparison, to what *would you have me judge of the extent of the bowl?* If, after this, any person should reply, I do not speak relatively, or comparatively, but *of the absolute extent of the bowl, and I ask you precisely what it is;* this question, it is evident, would be mere idle verbosity.

The same thing daily happens to ourselves, when things we are unacquainted with are presented to our view. If a machine, for example, is exhibited, to the use of which we are strangers, and we are asked whether we think it large, we know not what answer to make, because we are incapable of forming any comparison. In fact, the same space or compass, as that of a nut, is at the same time both great and small; as a diamond of equal size would be a very large one, and a melon of the like bigness extremely small;

there

there is therefore no absolute extent; and with respect to this there can be no error, either in the senses, or the mind.

CHAP. XVII.

This being supposed; of what use are particular observations to shew that small eyes, as those of a fly, must see objects of a quite different extent from what they would be seen by the eyes of an elephant? What conclusion is to be thence drawn? If the fly and the elephant had understanding, neither of them on that account would have a false idea of extent; for all extent being relative, they would each of them judge of the extent of objects by their own, of which they should have a perception. They might very justly say, Such an object is so many times bigger or less than my body, or such a particular part of my body: and in this respect, notwithstanding the difference of their eyes, their judgement with regard to extent would be still equally true on both sides.

This is what likewise happens with regard to men: however different may be the impression made on their eyes by the extent of objects, their ideas of the extent of objects are equally just; because each measures them according to the sentiment he has of his own particular extent.

135.
Every one
judges of extent,
or greatness, ac-
cording to his
own.

PART I.

therefore, reproach our senses with having plunged us into an abyss of errors because they do not make known absolute extent, which neither exists, nor can exist, and which even implies a contradiction in itself.

134.
Had there never been but one bowl in the world, it would neither be big nor little.

In fact, had there never been but one bowl in the world, what answer could a rational being make, if he should be asked what was the absolute extent of that bowl? It would be impossible for him to give any; and he must see no sense in the proposition, unless he should be prompted to enquire, In relation, or in comparison, to what *would you have me judge of the extent of the bowl?* If, after this, any person should reply, I do not speak relatively, or comparatively, but *of the absolute extent of the bowl, and I ask you precisely what it is;* this question, it is evident, would be mere idle verbosity.

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135.
Every one
judges of extent,
or greatness, ac-
cording to his
own.

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CHAPTER XVIII.

A recapitulation of the circumstances required to make the testimony of the senses a rule of truth.

136.
Rules for confirming the testimony of the senses.

I. IF the testimony of the senses is not contradicted in us, first, either by our own reason; secondly, by a previous testimony of the same senses; or, thirdly, by an actual testimony of another of our senses; or, fourthly, by the evidence of the senses of other men; it is then indubitable that the testimony of the senses is a species of first truth.

137.
This testimony affects only a part of the object seen.

It is proper to remember here, that the testimony of the senses does not affect all the parts of the object by which they are struck, as a great number of those parts make no impression on us; for their subtilty and minuteness are infinitely beyond the reach of our senses, which are consequently incapable of shewing us all the qualities inherent in the object.

138.
But this does not prevent it from being a rule of truth.

What shall I infallibly learn from the senses, supposing the conditions above mentioned? All that is, as I have said, of general use for the conduct and support of life: for example, that certain

certain bodies are liquid, and not hard or solid; that bread is solid nourishment, and that water is proper to dilute it; that it is day at certain hours, and night at others; that the weather is rainy, or serene: and so of other common truths of that nature; with regard to which we have as real a certainty, though of a different order, as of the certainty of our own existence.

CHAP. XVIII.

But some persons will perhaps ask, whether it is not possible for our senses to deceive us, at least by a miracle, even under the circumstances we have mentioned. It is very possible; and moreover, the certainty of the senses is confined to the order of Nature, which it supposes; and beyond that its prerogatives do not extend: this is so glaring and obvious in itself, that it requires no farther explanation.

CHAPTER XIX.

Of human authority, which in certain circumstances holds the place of a first truth.

B*Y authority* I mean the testimony of others, as far as it may be a motive for judging that a thing is true.

Two kinds of authority are chiefly distinguished; *divine*, and *human*. Divine authority is the

139.
What is meant
by authority.

140.
Divine and
human authority.

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the testimony of God himself; and human, the testimony of men.

Supposing God to be the truth itself, it is impossible not to judge a thing true when it is evident that it has been said by him. When we therefore resist divine faith, it is either because we are not convinced that God has confirmed the articles of our faith, or that we have not the idea of God.

Human authority is founded on the reports of men: for, though all men are fallible, there are, however, circumstances in which we should not resist their testimony, and where it is even impossible for a rational man to reject it. In such cases human authority holds the place of a first truth, beyond which there is no proceeding.

It is necessary to investigate those circumstances, in order to analyse that species of first truth which is generally called *moral certainty*.

141.
Passion and interest are obstacles to truth.

Nature has furnished men with such a disposition for discovering truth when it is within the reach of their comprehension, and for avowing it when they are not restrained by passion or interest, that it is impossible all should concur in acknowledging a falsehood for truth.

142.
Excluding those obstacles, the testimony of men is true under certain circumstances.

When we see, therefore, that no passion or interest can influence all men to attest unanimously certain facts, such as, that there exists a city called Rome, or Constantinople; that a sovereign reigned in

in England of the name of Canute, &c. the sole testimony of men united in opinion with regard to those matters, is to my mind a rule of truth that necessarily captivates my judgement, and consequently is a real certainty or evidence in the following circumstances:

CHAP. XIX.

1. If the knowledge of the truth in question is such as may be perfectly attained by the men who attest it.

143.
Circumstances
that confirm
authority.

2. If their number is so great, that a more considerable cannot be even desired by men of sense for a secure testimony.

3. If there is not the least room to suspect either interest or passion in their evidence.

4. If their testimony is not contradicted even by those who might be interested in opposing it.

Some one of these circumstances perhaps, and especially the latter, is not necessary; and, though it should be wanting, the authority of men would not be the less a rule of truth: but, when the four are found united, I say, that it is a rule of truth, of such certainty, that no rational man either can, or ever will dispute it.

144.
Being united,
they are rules
of truth.

The proof is drawn from what I have advanced, viz. that, in those circumstances, if we mean to be candid, we shall find it impossible

H

not

PART I.

not to judge the thing true : therefore, says Mr. Locke, we admit it as easily, and adhere to it as firmly, as if it were a certain knowledge ; so that, in consequence thereof, we reason and act with as little doubt, as if it were a perfect demonstration.

^{145.}
Mr. Locke calls
this sort of truth
only probability.

I am however surpris'd, that Mr. Locke gives only the name of *probability* to this rule of our judgements : his words are these. *The highest degree of probability is, when the general consent of all men, in all ages, as far as can be known, concurs with constant experience in confirming the truth of a particular fact attested by sincere witnesses.* I am, I say, surpris'd that Mr. Locke should give no more to all this than the name of *probability*. It is not, however, my intention to lose time in disputing about a word : Mr. Locke, perhaps, confin'd the name of *certainty* to such knowledge as we acquire only by personal experience ; but it must be acknowledged, that the justness neither of his thoughts nor expressions would have suffer'd, if he had, on this occasion, conformed to general practice : at any rate, he should have assign'd his motives for the deviation, where no plausible reason appears to justify it.

In fact, when he says, that we adhere to this probability *as firmly as to a certain knowledge*, does he not say, that it is not *a certain knowledge*? and, if it be not, why does he declare, that it *excludes*

all

all doubt equally with a perfect demonstration? Can
 a knowledge that excludes *all doubt* equally with
 a demonstration, be less than certain and evi-
 dent?

CHAP. XIX.

Laying aside, however, this species of contra-
 diction, if Mr. Locke really refused to admit, as
 an infallible rule of truth, what he has simply
 denominated *probability*, and which he afterwards
 does not scruple to call *assurance*, I would will-
 ingly ask, why he receives as a certainty the
 evidence of the eyes, and not the unanimous tes-
 timony of all men? Is it not Nature alike, in
 both cases, that imposes the necessity of assent to
 those testimonies, and convinces us that neither
 can deceive us?

146.
 He does not ap-
 pear to speak
 consequentially
 on this occasion.

And, indeed, there is no person, any way conver-
 sant with history, who is not at least as fully con-
 vinced that there has existed a city called Car-
 thage, as he is certain of what he has been eye-
 witness to; so that it is no less impossible for
 me to judge that all authors have been mistaken
 in this matter, than it is to believe that my eyes
 deceive me when I exert all imaginable care to
 rectify their use.

Mr. Locke moreover confesses, it is impossible
 to judge that all the types of a printing-house
 could ever be accidentally disposed in such happy
 order, as to form a poem so regular and elegant
 as the *Æneid* of Virgil: nor is it less impossible

H 2

for

PART I.

for me to believe that all men have been deceived, or have agreed to deceive me by persuading me to think that there existed a city of Carthage. It is therefore certain, that I am by no means at liberty to form a judgement contrary to the unanimous testimony of men: it appears evident to me, that *authority*, taken in this light, is not a simple probability, but a real certainty.

147.
This certainty makes an impression as necessary, but less lively.

I confess however, at the same time, that the latter kind of certainty, which forces my judgement with equal reality, subjects it nevertheless with less rapidity and vigour. I am not more certain that I have at this moment a paper before my eyes, than I am of the present existence of the city of Constantinople, and that there was formerly a city of Carthage: but the first certainty makes still a more lively impression on me than the second; and this is what confirms, in a very rational sense, the maxim mentioned elsewhere, *that we give greater credit to what we see, than to what we hear*; that is to say, we adhere to it, if not with more truth, at least with greater sensibility.

148.
Supreme degree of moral certainty.

The testimonies of human authority, universally received, form the highest degree of that kind of certainty commonly styled *moral certainty*.

This

This name merits particular attention, as it gives us to understand, that this species of certainty has a particular relation to the manners and conduct of men in the correspondence and society naturally kept up between them. Such, in fact, is the sort of certainty by which they are governed in their designs, prospects, enterprises, and general proceedings; so that he who should act contrary to this kind of certainty would appear as extravagant, and would be as really so, as if it were a metaphysical or geometrical certainty.

Moral certainty however seems to have some degrees; and it makes less impression on us, in proportion as the conditions I have mentioned are found less numerous and forcible.

Suppose, therefore, it relates to an historical fact, even those, with respect to whom it is asserted, are less fully persuaded of its truth when they see it contradicted by others; for, though it is seen those are somewhat mistaken in the matter, their judgement however leaves a kind of suspicion, that they see perhaps something in the affair in question which escapes us.

But, on the other hand, we must also allow, that moral certainty still prevails, notwithstanding those shadows of suspicion produced by weak imaginations, which are quickly dispersed by a more serious attention: so that those who have

CHAP. XIX.

149.
Why this certainty is called moral.

150.
Degree of moral certainty.

151.
It subsists, notwithstanding vain suspicions.

PART I.

investigated the truth of certain historical facts, remain firmly convinced of them, though they see them contradicted by authors and persons whom interest or passion influences to speak and think differently from others.

152,
The three principal conditions
are sufficient.

It seems therefore, as I have hinted, that moral certainty, at least when it is not in the highest degree, requires only the two or three conditions first mentioned, viz. 1. That the authority and testimony of men appertain to facts of which the knowledge is perfectly within the reach of those who relate them, and that they could not have been mistaken.

2. That they must be so numerous, and of such different characters and dispositions, that there cannot be any room for suspecting them of collusion.

3. Their testimony must be free from every appearance of passion or interest,

C H A P.

CHAPTER XX.

An appendix upon memory: whether it is a rule of truth.

IT is necessary to mention here a rule of truth, which appears to some people to be the same with those we have been speaking of, and which however might be thought different. It consists in the simple remembrance of truths, and not in the actual impression they make upon us, which relates as much to truths that are *logical* and *consequential*, as those that are *real* and *primary*. It is asked, for example, whether, after having known by rational deduction all the consequences of a principle, I am as well convinced of it when I afterwards simply recollect the assurance I gained by argument, as when it was present to my mind, and actually convinced me. In like manner it is asked, whether I am as fully assured of a thing which I remember to have seen, as when I actually saw it.

If the degree of vivacity of impression is considered in the certainty, all the world will allow, that it is greater on one side than the other; the conviction being quite differently sensible, when

H 4

I see,

153.
The memory of
certain facts.

154.
Its impression is
less lively.

PART I.

I see, from what it is when I only recollect to have seen.

Besides, may I not possibly happen to mistake an imaginary for a real remembrance? If it be, however, a remembrance that is very distinct and circumstantial, it supplies the place of the actual presence of the object, and we cannot be mistaken in it; but, if the memory be ever so little impaired or obscured, as is the case with almost every person sooner or later, though in a manner frequently imperceptible, we should be cautious of the conviction that is derived from memory. Personal experience, however, and reflection, must regulate the greater or less degree of credit that is to be given to the certainty of the memory. This may suggest a very important reflection.

155.
Memory of the
conviction formerly had.

We find some people attached to certain opinions; and, because they cannot actually account for them, they are considered as wrong-headed and obstinate; which is not always the case: it arises only from their not recollecting the reasons of their opinion, while they clearly remember that they were deeply impressed and fully convinced by them. Sometimes also it may be a pretext of obstinacy, in order to persuade themselves that nothing can be added or opposed to the reasons of which they imagine they have felt all the force. When things, therefore, merit attention, we should, in matters of proofs and arguments,

arguments, rarely trust to the simple remembrance of our having been convinced by them; but we should actually recall them to the memory, and distrust them the more, the greater difficulty we find in tracing them; because nothing remains so deeply impressed on the mind, and is more easily recovered, especially when it is wanting, than a solid reason. I know that this maxim is not so general but it may admit of exceptions; but they are too few, generally speaking, to restrain us from adhering, in practice, to the rule here laid down.

CHAPTER XXI.

Of rules of probability, which supply the place of first truths in the common conduct of life.

TRUTH is a thing of such importance to man, that he should always pursue the best methods for attaining it; and, when the object eludes all his researches, he should remedy the disappointment by attaching himself to what comes nearest to it; and what comes nearest to it, we call *probability*.

It is necessary to observe, that a thing, or rather an opinion, approaches the truth only in certain particulars; for, to approach the *truth* is

156.
Probability supplies the place of truth.

157.
It resembles the truth only in certain particulars.

PART I.

resemble the truth; that is, to be proper for forming or renewing in the mind the idea of truth: and, if an opinion were to produce equal ideas of *truth*, in every point of view in which it might be considered, nothing would appear in it but what was true; neither could we judge the matter otherwise than true; and it would in that case be really *true*, or the truth itself.

158.

In some particulars also it is like falsehood.

As what is not true, however, is false; and as what does not resemble truth resembles falsehood; we find in every thing, that is simply called *probability*, some circumstances that resemble falsehood: it would be a misapplication, therefore, of terms, to say an opinion is precisely probable because it is found in several particulars to resemble truth. Opinions having other parts that resemble falsehood, those opposite sides should be duly weighed, in order to know which preponderate, that we may properly attribute the quality of probability to the opinion considered; without which, it would be at the same time probable and not probable; which would be merely cavilling, or playing upon words.

159.

What equally resembles truth and falsehood is not probable.

In fact, what sense would there be in saying, I call *resembling truth* what resembles falsehood as much as truth? Were we asked what colour a stuff, equally stained with black and white, resembles, would we answer, that it resembles white because it is partly white? An enquiry might be

be made at the same time, why we did not say likewise that it resembled black, as it had as much of the one as the other? With less reason could we say, that the colour of the stuff resembled white, if it had more of black than of white: on the contrary, if the white predominated much more than the black, so as to give us such a strong idea of white that the black should, comparatively, make but a very faint impression, we would say, that colour comes near to white, and resembles white: it might even approach it so very near, as to make us confound it with white, and call it so, especially on those occasions where it would not be necessary to distinguish so precisely the colour of white from what came very near it.

It happens, however, on occasions where we are not so very precise in our manner of speaking, that when we find a few more true parts than false, we call the thing probable; but to be absolutely probable, there must manifestly and obviously appear many more parts true than false: without this the resemblance remains indeterminate, and approaches not nearer to truth than falsehood.

What has been said of resemblance of truth, is understood likewise of probability, as probability relates only to what the mind approves, on account of its resemblance inclining to that side where the greatest appearances of truth are, rather

CHAP. XXI.

160.
We are not so
very exact in
this matter on
ordinary occa-
sions.

PART I.

rather than to the contrary; supposing the mind wishes to be determined.

161.
The mind may suspend its judgement as to verisimilar matters, but not judge the contrary.

I say, supposing it wishes to be determined; for, as the mind necessarily inclines only to the truth, when that does not appear in the clearest and fullest light, it may suspend its determination; but, if it does not suspend it, it can then only incline to that side on which there is the greatest appearance of truth.

162.
Whether we may judge in favour of what is least probable.

Two difficulties occur on this subject, which require explanation: the first is, to know whether the mind might not be determined in favour of an opinion less probable, by considering it only in those particulars that come near the truth; though it should have many more, that approached near to falsehood, to which the mind actually paid no attention: this is as it were the whole ground-work of the famous question relative to *probable opinion*, which is in the mouth of every body, and which, however, few understand.

I answer, that the mind might then be determined as to the parts that approach the truth in the opinion, but not as to the opinion itself: for, if we do not wish to misapply terms, an opinion *less probable* is that which presents to the mind a much greater appearance of falsehood than of truth. If, therefore, when we are determined,

mined, we have not present to our minds the appearances of falsehood that are in the opinion; we are not determined with respect to the opinion itself, but only with regard to those appearances of truth we discover in it, and which alone are not the opinion; as, according to this supposition, the opinion is less probable: and this arises both from a greater appearance of falsehood, and a less appearance of truth.

To ask, therefore, *whether we may determine in favour of an opinion less probable, considering it only as to those parts that approach the truth*, is to ask whether we may determine for an opinion *less probable*, when it is no longer an opinion *less probable*; which is mere idle verbosity.

It may be asked, with more reason, whether in an opinion there might not be parts of a mixed nature between truth and falsehood, of which the mind could form no determinate idea. This is a thing I cannot dispute. Thus, in the opinion of some, that there are inhabitants in the moon, I find some colour of truth, in saying that matter, being supposed of similar nature, if it can support inhabitants in one of the globes of the universe, it may preserve them in another. I see likewise some appearance of falsehood in declaring that, because it has inhabitants in one of its globes, it follows that it has them in all the rest;

161.
Whether parts, neither true nor false, may be found in an opinion.

PART I.

rest; but, to know whether it was consistent with the magnificence of God to place inhabitants in all the globes of the universe, is what I cannot judge to be true or false, because it is a point in which the mind is lost and bewildered, as it is an object beyond the reach of its faculties. I am speaking here of what naturally passes in the mind, and not of what religion may teach us.

164.
What appears
neither true, nor
false, should
make no im-
pression.

In an hypothesis similar to that above stated, in which truth and falsehood appear to the mind with something of a mixed nature, partaking of both, what methods are to be taken for discovering *probability*? We must consider what is of a mixed nature, between truth and falsehood, as nothing; as in fact it is incapable of making any impression on a rational mind: besides, as I have already observed, we should weigh what appears true against what appears false, to see whether one of the two does not visibly preponderate. We never hold an opinion as *probable*, when it is not visibly impressed with stronger marks of truth than falsehood.

165.
The word *pro-
bable* is equiv-
ocal in its use.

As custom, however, authorises the word *probable*, even on those occasions when reasons appear for judging on either side; we have no objection to its being employed, provided it be remembered that *probable*, in that sense, resembles false-

falsehood as much as truth: and after all, when an opinion is accompanied by appearances of truth and falsehood nearly equal, I would, in that case, rather call it *dubious* than probable; but common discourse will not be reformed by my reflexions, or metaphysical precision.

CHAP. XXI.

CHAPTER XXII.

Of different degrees and species of probability.

THE highest degree of probability is what approaches to a physical certainty; which may itself, perhaps, subsist with some suspicion or possibility of falsehood: for example, I am physically certain, that my eyes are actually struck with the whiteness of this paper; but this certainty supposes things to remain in a natural state; and, if unaffected by any miraculous cause, probability increases, as it were, and approaches by so many degrees nearer to truth, as we find it more clearly possessed of a greater number of the following circumstances.

1. When what we judge probable agrees with evident truth.

2. When

166.
Every probability subsists with some possibility of falsehood.

167.
Circumstances that increase probability.

PART I.

2. When, having doubted of an opinion, we afterwards find it confirmed in proportion as we consider it more attentively, and more closely examine it.

3. When proofs, of which we had no idea before, arise to strengthen those that had been the foundation of our opinion.

4. When we judge in consequence of a greater experience in the things we investigate.

5. When the judgement we formed of things of a similar nature has been afterwards confirmed. Such are nearly the various degrees of probability by which, according to their greater extent and number, our opinion is more nearly similar to truth; so that, if all those circumstances were to be found in their fullest extent, as the opinion would then be perfectly similar to truth, and unlike it in no particular, it would not only pass for probable, but true; or even it would be true in fact; as a piece of stuff that resembled white in every respect, would not only be like white, but likewise called absolutely white.

168.
Men, it is presumed, tell truth.

What has been now said of probability in general, is of itself, as it were, applicable to that probability which is deduced from the authority and testimony of men: for, though men in general may lye, and we have frequent experience of their untruth; nevertheless, as Nature has.

has inspired all men with the love of truth, we may presume, that he who speaks to us is governed by that inclination, when we have no reason to judge or suspect him of falsehood.

The reasons we may have are deduced from the man himself, or the things related by him; from the man, with respect to his capacity or inclination.

1. With respect to his capacity, if he is little qualified to judge properly of what he relates.
2. If he has been frequently mistaken at other times.
3. If he is of a hasty and warm imagination: a character very common among men of wit, who easily take the shadow or appearance of things for the things themselves; and the phantom of their own ideas, for the truth which they fancy they discern.

With respect to their inclination. 1. If it be a man who has contracted a habit of speaking differently from what he thinks, though in trifling matters only; for, when the habit is once formed, it generally influences the conduct in the more important concerns of life, as in matters of little consequence: besides, though the habit should not be formed, if we have frequently experienced that a person is apt to deviate from the truth, we should be more cautious of believing him; especially if we discover, or justly suspect,

169.
Reasons for
judging that
they do not
speak truth.

170.
With regard to
their capacity.

171.
With respect to
their inclination
or will.

PART I.

172.
With regard to
the things of
which they
speak.

spect, that he has any interest in disguising the truth, and may hope to succeed by dissimulation.

With regard to the things he says. 1. If they do not regularly follow, and appear consistent. 2. If they do not correspond with what we have heard from others of equal credit. 3. If they are of themselves difficult to be believed, or upon subjects in which he might have been easily deceived.

173.
Circumstances
in which they
should be cre-
dited.

Contrary circumstances give probability to what we are told, 1. When we know the person who speaks to us to be a man of a clear and sound understanding, of an imagination temperate and plausible, and of strict and unshaken sincerity. 2. When, moreover, the circumstances of things related by him are no way contradictory, but agree with facts or principles of which we have no room to entertain a doubt; according as those circumstances shall increase and be confirmed by the testimony of greater numbers, the probability will likewise acquire an additional proportion of strength. It may, even in this manner, attain to so high a degree, as to make it impossible for us to suspend our judgement at the view of so many circumstances resembling truth.

CHAPTER XXIII.

Elucidation of a particular difficulty relative to the probability that is founded on testimonies transmitted from one person to another.

A Difficulty is started with regard to what has been said, that the probability increases in proportion to the number of persons who deliver the testimony on which it is founded. The difficulty rests on the number of persons who speak only from the authority of each other; so that the first alone have given evidence with respect to the knowledge they had of a fact, personally and of themselves, without the intervention of any other authority.

In this supposition, it is asked whether all the testimonies, given solely in consequence of the first being collected together, form an authority that adds any degree of strength to the first alone. Some persons think not: and even Locke will have it, that the authority is thereby manifestly less. To prove this, he says, that, the more distant a truth is from its source, the weaker it grows; so that a testimony has less strength in proportion to its distance from the original truth. A man worthy of credit,

174.
Whether authority is augmented by the successive relation of a number of persons.

175.
Mr. Locke imagines the authority is thereby lessened.

PART I.

credit, says he, who declares that a thing is known to himself, is a sufficient proof; but, if another person, equally worthy of belief, relates the same thing, on the authority of the first, the testimony is less strong. If a third declares it, on the report of the second, the testimony is still weaker; and so on progressively: so that, if we proceed to a hundred, the testimony must be, in a manner, invalid. This author, therefore, condemns a practice common among some people, with whom opinions acquire new strength as they grow old. It is on this foundation, adds he, that propositions evidently false, or very uncertain in their origin, come to be respected as authentic truths by a probability taken in a wrong light.

Every circumstance advanced by so ingenious an author, relative to a difficulty of such an interesting nature, merits, I think, a particular discussion.

176.

A false or uncertain opinion is not the less so for being old.

It is certain, that an opinion false or uncertain does not become less false or uncertain by growing old; and the practice of considering it certain, merely on account of its antiquity and extensive circulation, merits contempt: for time can never affect the truth. Besides, this practice appears entirely foreign to the question, and does not belong to the terms of the hypothesis advanced by Mr. Locke.

177.

This is not the point in question.

In

In fact, he speaks, in his supposition, of the testimony of a truth that may have been transmitted down to us by various witnesses in succession, but supposing each of them equally credible and worthy of faith. According to this supposition, however, provided we strictly adhere to it, the testimony must not, I think, be weakened for having been transmitted by various witnesses, though their number should amount to a hundred. In order to illustrate the matter, let us exemplify it by an historical fact.

I will suppose, that an author worthy of credit has written, that a monarch of the name of Cyrus subjected a great empire in Asia, and reigned over the Persians: if a second author, equally worthy of faith, testifies the same fact on the authority of the first writer, a third after that of the second, and, in like manner, others to a hundred, so as that each of the hundred be equally worthy of credit: I say, that, according to this supposition, the hundredth testimony is not weakened by the distance of time from the original truth. The reason I have, in fact, to believe the first testimony, and on which a degree of probability is founded, is the same that authorises an equal degree of probability in the hundredth testimony, as, according to the supposition, I find equally on all sides witnesses worthy of credit, who, from hand to hand, or from mouth to mouth, have

178.
The question
with respect to
a true fact
transmitted by
witnesses wor-
thy of belief.

PART I.

179.
We are not less
assured at pre-
sent of the reign
of Cyrus, than
people were a
thousand years
ago.

transmitted to me the same truth, without my perceiving, or having any reason to suspect, that it has been altered. Nor does it really appear, that we are, at present, less assured of the reign of Cyrus over the Persians, than people were a hundred years ago; and those who lived a hundred years ago were as well persuaded of it as people two hundred years before; and it was equally believed a thousand years ago as a hundred years after the death of Cyrus.

Locke appears to be mistaken, therefore, in imagining that probability is weakened after a succession of witnesses, *whose authority is equally respectable*. It is true, that the supposition is rarely found to be exactly conformable to reality, with respect to facts that are neither public, nor interesting; for it is not possible to find such a number of witnesses equally *worthy* of credit, that is, equally sincere, judicious, and exact, in giving a just and faithful relation of what they have seen or heard, without adding or diminishing the least circumstance, either as to the sense of things, or the words, which in passing through various lips imperceptibly alter the meaning.

180.
A distinction is
to be made be-
tween different
kinds of traditi-
onal authority.

A wide distinction, however, must be made between different truths transmitted by a long train of successive testimonies, and by what is commonly called the *way of tradition*.

If they are accompanied by a great number of motives, or particular circumstances, which may easily escape the penetration or memory of man, and the imperfection of human language; if they are of such a nature as that they may be altered, either on account of circumstances that cannot be proved, or through the interest people might have in disguising them, the way of tradition, in such cases, neither can, nor ought to be readily admitted.

181.
Some are liable to error.

But, if nothing is found to make it suspected, it does not appear reasonable to conclude, that the knowledge of a truth is weakened merely on account of the antiquity of the tradition, when all those who have successively confirmed this tradition are *equally worthy of credit*.

On the contrary, the more long and ancient a tradition of the kind is, the more credible and authentic it becomes: not that the testimonies given of it, after a long series of years, are really of greater weight than the first, whence the tradition originated; but because, having been transmitted by many, if they are men of penetration, judgement, and capacity, and especially such as were powerfully interested at all times in examining and confirming the first testimony which began the tradition, it is evident, that the original testimony becomes thereby less suspicious,

182.
In what sense the antiquity of an opinion makes it more credible.

PART I.

cious, and more certain. We might, in fact, imagine, that credit possibly had been first given to it through prejudice or interested motives, which cannot be the same with all men in all times; and consequently a succession of time and testimonies makes the first testimony less suspicious and uncertain, or rather, more solid and perfect. It is far, therefore, from being generally true, that the more distant a truth is from the period of its commencement, the weaker it grows: on the contrary, there are opinions which acquire new strength by time; otherwise a particular absurdity would thence ensue, and an authentic record, confirmed by a great number of edicts or testimonies, given in consequential support of each other, would thereby become more dubious; and thus, what is judged most respectable and best founded in society, would appear most contemptible, and least authentic.

CHAP.

CHAPTER XXIV.

Of the use of probability.

THOUGH this article seems to relate to practice, which is not calculated for a science of speculation, it will not be improper, however, to bestow some little reflection upon it; especially when, by considering probability as to its use, we shall discover the nature of it better; and, as speculation is generally a principle in the direction of practice, practice, on this occasion, shall help to expound speculation.

The most natural and general use of probability is, to supply the place of *truth*; so that, where our minds cannot reach the truth, they may at least arrive at probability, as a place of rest, and what is nearest to that of truth, to which natural propensity leads them. Probability, however, must make various impressions on us; according to the subject and occasion.

1. With regard to things of mere speculation, it is prudent to avoid giving a free assent to them until after mature deliberation; for, although truth necessarily forces conviction, and that the appearance of truth simply considered

in

183.

The use of probability is not a science of speculation.

184.

In conduct, it should supply the place of truth.

185.

Our assent to it should be given with reserve.

PART I.

186.
We should frequently suspend our judgement, with respect to probability in speculation ;

187.
especially in speculative matters.

188.
To refrain from judging is often a mark of a judicious mind.

in general produces the same effects in proportion, the appearance however of truth in probability always subsists with an appearance of falsehood, which has a sufficient influence on the mind to suspend our judgement until the will determines it ; I say, *suspend* it, because it has not the power of determining the mind on the side of what appears least true : wherefore I say, that, in matters of mere speculation, it is very right not to suffer the will to determine the judgement, unless when the degrees of probability are so considerable, that they almost entirely efface all appearance of falsehood, and every danger of deception.

In things, in fact, of mere speculation, no inconveniency can result from suspending our judgement ; and the danger of being deceived, which ever accompanies a probable judgement, although in a less degree than the confidence of not being deceived, seems a sufficient motive for withholding our opinion : for what occasion is there for judging, when, on the one hand, there can be no inconveniency in avoiding it ; and, on the other side, we may fall into an error by judging ? Can it answer any purpose to run such a risk, when it is neither useful, nor necessary ?

Some persons will perhaps say, we should then refrain from judging with respect to most part of our knowledge ; and that is the character of
stupi-

stupidity. On the contrary, it is the character of a sensible man, and a true philosopher, to judge of objects from evidence alone, when there can be no reason for acting otherwise. There can be none, however, for judging of things of mere speculation, when they are no more than probable. We should be satisfied, on such occasions, with judging of what is evident; that such an opinion is probable, and perhaps the most probable: but we must not judge that the most probable opinion is therefore true; for this practice would strengthen a disposition of the will, that is already too apt to persuade the mind to consider as true whatever might be pleasing to the will to be so.

Some persons may not at first perhaps discern the difference there is between judging a thing probable, and judging this probable thing true: but a very little attention will be sufficient to demonstrate so essential a disparity between them, that I know not whether it is not that which chiefly distinguishes men of solid understanding from others.

This rule however, so judicious with respect to things of mere speculation, is not the same as to matters of practice and conduct, where there is an absolute necessity of acting, or not acting, one way or another: in fact, though the will should not determine the judgement to take probability

189.
Difference between judging a thing probable, and judging the same thing true.

190.
In practice, probability should determine, as well as truth;

PART I.

bability for truth, it should however influence it, with regard to things of practice, to adhere to probability, and be satisfied with it, as with truth; fixing our attention only on the appearances of truth, which, in probability, surpasses the appearances of falsehood.

191.
Because it is necessary to act and come to some determination.

The reason of this is evident; as, with regard to practice, it is necessary to act, and consequently to come to some determination; for, were we to remain undetermined, we should never act, which would be the most pernicious and most absurd conduct. That we may not, therefore, remain undetermined, we must, as it were, shut our eyes to what may appear true on the side contrary to that we embrace; for, as truth itself naturally attracts us, it would not fail to suspend our determination. It is proper therefore to observe, that prudence acts only with respect to probability; for to act against a truth perfectly evident, is not merely imprudence, but downright folly.

192.
During deliberation we should view the thing on all sides, and afterwards pay attention only to what is true.

Though, in deliberation, we cannot be too careful to examine the different circumstances or appearances of truth, that are found on every side, in order to be certain where the probability lies: when we are, however, once assured of this, we should, as I have already remarked, consider it as true with respect to practice; that is, we should pay attention only to what is true, that we may not lose sight of it:
other.

otherwise we should fall into irresolution and inaction, or levity and inconstancy, which are marks of littleness or weakness of mind.

CHAP. XXIV.

I am sensible that many, on the contrary, imagine, that irresolution and inconstancy frequently proceed from superior capacity, which perceives every reason, that is, the marks and appearances for and against the same thing; and, having a lively perception of them, it conceives all the force of both, which restrains it from entirely relinquishing the one in favour of the other. But this irresolution is still a defect of the mind, which, in the midst of the various appearances of the same object, cannot distinguish those that should be preferred to the rest, when a determination is necessary; or that does not, at least, sufficiently perceive this necessity, without which there is no acting on occasions where we suppose it necessary; except, on such occasions, we may, and often more wisely, as I have already observed, remain undetermined between two opinions that are no more than probable.

193-
Irresolution
shews capacity,
and want of ca-
pacity.

FIRST TRUTHS

CHAPTER XXIV

For
Intuition
is a faculty
of the mind
and is not
a sense
of the body

obviously we should fall into intuition and
intuition, or feeling and knowledge, which are
names of different or various of mind.
- I am sensible that many, on the contrary, in-
gine, that intuition and knowledge have only
proceed from superior capacity which permits
every reason, that is, the marks and appearances
for and against the thing; and, having a
lively perception of them, it conceives all the
force of both, which remains in form entire,
reproducing the one in favour of the other.
But this intuition is still a habit of the mind,
which, in the midst of the various appearances
of the same object, cannot distinguish the
should be preferred to the rest, when a determi-
nation is necessary, or that does not, at least,
sufficiently perceive this necessity, without which
there is no acting on occasions where we suppose
it necessary: except on such occasions, we may
and often more wisely, as I have already ob-
served, remain undetermined between two opi-
nions that are no more than probable.

PART

P A R T II.

In which First Truths are examined with
respect to Beings generally considered.

PART II.

In which Part II. is contained a list of the
respects to which the same are referred.



CHAPTER I.

Of beings in general.

WE have hitherto considered what part in our judgements gives them the character of first truths. We now mean to examine what can be discovered of first truths, relative to the nature and properties of beings on which we generally exercise our judgement: so that the precise consideration of their principal attributes may furnish us with accurate ideas to form as many first truths with regard to all beings.

It may appear necessary first to explain what a *being* is in itself; but the idea of it is so manifest, simple, and necessary, that it is impossible to make it more clearly known. Therefore, if we say, that a *being* is that which exists, or the contrary of nothing, as it is termed by some, the matter is not more clearly explained; as the terms of the definition, *exist* and *nothing*, are neither more simple nor more clear than *being*, and even suppose the knowledge of others.

K

In

194.
The idea of beings furnishes first truths.

PART II.

195.
We should consider in beings their essence and qualities.

In every being whatever, all that can be known is comprehended under two points of view. 1. As to the parts without which it would not be called that being; and this is what is called *essence*. 2. With respect to the parts without which it would still be called the same being; and this is named *mode* or *manner of being*. Thus, when we find that man cannot be called so without being a *rational animal*, we judge, that those two ideas, *animal* and *rational*, constitute the essence of man: and when, on the contrary, we discover that man would be still entitled to that appellation, without having a taste for poetry, or being five feet high, we conclude, that this *taste* or *height* are modes. Therefore, all that is, or can be conceived, in every being, is either the *essence* or *mode*. We shall first speak of the essence, and afterwards of the modes.

CHAPTER II.

Of the essence of beings.

196.
Definition of essence no way instructive.

ESSENCE is commonly defined, *to be that by which a thing is what it is*; but, as a thing is of itself what it is, this definition of essence says no more than that *the essence of a thing*

is to be *that thing*; which scarce conveys a better idea of *essence* in general, than if no attempt had been made to explain it.

CHAP. II.

At other times, Philosophers, desirous of discovering the essence of each particular being, represent a certain number of qualities, of which they form a collection of ideas, which they term *definition*; supposing that every thing expressed in this definition is the essence of the thing; or, that whatever is not expressed in it, is not the essence of this thing. An important observation occurs on this occasion.

197.
The essence taken for the definition.

The object of this collection of ideas, which forms a definition, is not precisely the same out of our thought as it is there: thus the collection of ideas which forms the definition of a globe, that is to say, of a figure perfectly round, and whose superficies is in every part perfectly equidistant from a certain point called the *centre*—this object, I say, is not, out of our mind, such as it is represented by this collection of ideas, as there is no globe existing that is perfectly round, and of which all the points of the surface are in fact perfectly equidistant from the centre. This essence of the globe, that is the object of my thought when I define a globe, is not an object that is, out of my thought, exactly such as it is in my thought: therefore, while we so long defined the earth we inhabit to

198.
The definition does not represent all that the thing defined really is.

PART II.

be a globe composed of *land* and *water*, this collection of ideas or qualities was not really, out of our minds, such as it was in our minds; since it has been discovered, that the earth we inhabit is not round, but oval. In like manner also with respect to man, who is defined a *rational animal*: this essence of man, which is here the object of my thought; is not, out of my mind, precisely such as it is in my thought; for, were it precisely so, it must exist, out of my mind, the same as it in my thought, without any possibility of addition or diminution. We however not only may, but must, add something to this definition, to make it conformable to what man is out of my thought; for he is not only a *rational animal*, but he is likewise a rational animal of such a figure: so that, if we were to represent to ourselves a rational animal under the figure of a bear, or a May-fly, we should not represent man such as he really is out of our mind; as no essence of a man really exists under the figure of a bear or May-fly, nor do we even see how he could naturally exist under the figure of either.

199.
Example in the
definition of
man.

I know it is usually said, that the figure of a man is no more than a quality, and not his essence: but I ask, whether a man, such as God has really made him, can be found without this quality? It is evident he cannot. It is therefore necessarily inseparable from man, such as

God

God has made him. The definition of a rational animal does not therefore fully represent the whole man as he really exists.

CHAP. II.

If this quality moreover does not really belong to the essence of man, why are monsters, of which women have been delivered, declared not to be men, on account of their figure only? Why do we not wait until they have attained to the age of reason, that we may see whether they are rational animals? On the other hand, why does the human figure alone persuade us to judge that an idiot is a man, though we never hear him reason? Figure, shape, or a certain corporeal form, belongs therefore to the real essence of man; and man is therefore really something else besides what is expressed in the definition of him.

200.
The figure of man belongs to his real existence.

The essence we have in our minds by *the definition*, and which we shall for the future call *represented essence*, because it is nothing but the representation made by the mind of what we judge most particular, and immediately applicable, to the things out of our minds—this represented essence, I say, is not therefore the essence which I shall hereafter name real: for the latter consists in an intimate collection of qualities; and, as those cannot always be perceived, distinguished, or expressed, it is not precisely either what is expressed by the definition, or

201.
The represented or metaphysical essence is different from the real or physical essence.

PART II.

that essence *represented* by the definition, which some persons might confound with the *real* essence. Philosophers, however, usually distinguish them by different names: one they call *metaphysical essence*, and the other *physical*. In order to make a proper use of their important distinction, we should all remember, that the metaphysical essence is no more than a notion they form to themselves, some frequently one way, and some another; as may be seen by definitions quite different of the same thing, merely according to the particular ideas conceived by each; and, as what they have conceived is not always conformable to the immediate, real, and entire nature of the thing, the metaphysical essence is, generally speaking, much less the nature of the thing, than the particular idea formed of it by each. This reflection should lessen the high esteem in which metaphysical essence is held by some, unless they would expose themselves to the danger of taking an idea for a reality.

CHAPTER III.

An enquiry relative to two ideas of essence; one of which is attributed to Plato, and the other to Des Cartes.

THE first and most ancient of these opinions is that ascribed to Plato; and is, that *the essence of every thing is, in itself, eternal and immutable.* Let us attentively consider what is the just sense of those terms, which can only be understood of a *real* essence, or of an essence *represented.*

If they are understood of a *real* essence, we speak of a thing really existing at all times whatever, past, present, or *future.* Now, I know of no being existing of itself, eternal and immutable, but God, who created all things at a certain time, agreeable to his own will and pleasure: and therefore there is no essence eternal and immutable, except that of God. If Plato really imagined that the essences of all things existing, are in themselves eternal, like that of God, he would have taught a falsehood equally impious and manifest; the bare mention of which should appear dangerous, instead of being used as an argument, when we

202.
Whether essence
is eternal and
immutable.

203.
The real or natural
essence of
God is alone
immutable.

PART II.

declare that the essence of things is eternal, without rightly understanding either what we say ourselves, or what was meant by Plato.

204.
God can alter
the real or natu-
ral essence of
creatures.

Besides, to say that the real essence is immutable, is to say that God himself cannot any way alter things existing as he has made them; for this is what we call *real essence*. That God, however, cannot any way alter the things he has made, or make them otherwise, appears unwarrantable, and is setting unnecessary bounds to divine omnipotence. We cannot therefore say, that the real essence of things as God has made them, is immutable in that sense.

205.
The number of
essences is not
limited.

It cannot be more justly said, that the essence of things is immutable and eternal, agreeable to the sense of some persons, who imagine that there is no more than a certain number of essences, or models of things, according to which all beings are formed, and to which every thing possible must be referred; so that even God himself cannot make any beyond this determinate number of essences. This again would be giving inconsistent bounds to the almighty power of God.

206.
The essence re-
presented is not
eternal.

We have now only to examine whether eternity and immutability of essence is applicable to represented or metaphysical essence, which consists in the idea and particular judgement we form with regard to the real essence of things; as when we judge that the essence of a man is, to

be

be a rational animal. But, by supposing essence to be such a thought or judgement, essence cannot be said to be either eternal or immutable, as the thought and judgement are not so. (181.)

If nothing more is meant, than that what we call *man* could never be otherwise than a *rational animal*, as what we denominate a triangle could never be any thing else but a figure composed of three lines and three angles; the proposition is very true, and of such evident truth, that it appears childish to speak so mysteriously of what is obvious to the eyes of all mankind; for it is very clear, that, if a rational animal is what we call man, man could never be other than a *rational animal*. In fact, as *man* and *rational animal*, in this case, precisely signify the same idea; to say that man could never be other than a *rational animal*, is only saying that a *man* could never be any thing else but a *man*, and a *rational animal* nothing else than a *rational animal*; or, if you will, it is saying that *such a thing*, or *such an idea*, could never have been but *such a thing or idea*.

But to know whether such an idea or judgement as I have formed to myself, of a thing existing distinct from me, or whether any *essence represented* in my mind, may not, and should not, change with regard to the real essence existing out of my mind, which I actually wish to represent to myself, and to which it is not always conformable,

207.
What is such a thing cannot actually be other than what it is.

208.
The essence represented must often vary.

PART II.

formable, is what cannot be a real subject of dispute : for it is clear, that we should alter a judgement when it is not found true, abandon a defective definition for one that is just, and an essence, in short, improperly represented, for one that is represented properly. To take things in this sense, it is evident that nothing is less immutable than essence.

209.
Whether God
can make a
thing to be so,
and not so.

This, perhaps, has given rise to an opinion directly contrary to that of the followers of Plato, and which, it is said, is the sentiment of Des Cartes : it is, that the essence of things is so far from being immutable, that God can change it as he pleases, so as to make of every essence an essence intirely different. Thus, though the essence of a mountain is to have a valley, God nevertheless, according to those philosophers, can readily form a mountain without a valley : but this is running into another excess, which is nothing but empty verbosity ; and I am amazed that any person could ascribe it to Des Cartes, unless it was with the view of making him ridiculous : for, in short, a mountain without a valley, is a mountain that is no mountain, and which cannot be one ; as what we call a *mountain* is a rising ground, or eminence, of which the bottom is termed *valley*. This would be saying, therefore, that God *can make what cannot be made* ; and to speak in that manner, is to make use of words that form

form no sense or idea, and which, on the contrary, destroy every idea and reason. Thus, in what has been advanced by ancient and modern philosophers, relative to essence, we find a confusion of words, which has occasioned, at various periods, different confusions of ideas, that must be equally avoided, in order to distinguish clearly the first truths we may discover with respect to essence.

CHAPTER IV.

Of things that are said to have a similar or different essence.

WE clearly conceive that God could make all beings otherwise than they are; not in the sense, that any one being might exist in a particular manner, and, at the same time, not exist in that particular manner; (this supposition would destroy itself) but in such a sense, that, instead of the being which we particularly call man, God could make a being, that, with all the privileges of a man, should have besides many more; who might, for example, have more than five senses to experience perceptions of which we are incapable, pass over a hundred leagues in a mo-

210.
God can make
a being similar
to man, with
more or less
powers.

PART II.

moment, or subsist without the common food of man, and possess a number of other similar faculties.

Again, as such a being would have superior prerogatives to that being we commonly call man, God could likewise create a being that might possess a part of the privileges of man, but not the whole; a being that should never be possessed of more knowledge than an infant of two years old, and whose mind would never be capable of forming any rational conclusion.

211.
It would be useless to dispute whether they would have different essences.

In the supposition of these two new sorts of beings who should have something similar and something dissimilar to that species of being which is man, such as God has made him, it might be disputed, whether those three kinds of beings would have the same, or a different essence; and whether the same essence of man would be common to all three, or each possess an essence peculiar to himself: the dispute, however, would solely turn upon words, to know what was meant to be called *same essence*, or *essence of man*. Suppose again, that it was agreed to call *essence of man* whatever is a *rational animal*, the dispute would then be confined to other words, to know what is understood by *rational animal*; and whether the word *animal* may be applicable to a being that should have the use of
more

more than five sorts of senses, and be capable of subsisting without food; or whether the word *rational* might be applied to a being incapable, as we suppose, of any regular degree of reason; though he should however be, according to the supposition, of the same physical constitution of an infant of two years old, who has in the main a rational soul. The contest, I say, would turn upon a word; and none would be wrong on either side, except as to the word; the one saying, that those three sorts of beings must be *different essences*, and the other asserting, that the three beings form but one *essence*: for, by admitting the supposition, the disputants would all have the same ideas that are expressed in it, acknowledging what it admits similar or dissimilar in the three kinds of beings; so that, having all the same ideas, they must therefore dispute only about words, in order to find what names are aptly applied to those ideas to which we would give the name of *unity of essence*, and others the appellation of *variety of essence*. To remove all such perplexity of words, so frequently occasioned with respect to *essence*, and to form ideas thereof, that may be so many first truths, all that is necessary, is, to keep the following articles constantly in remembrance.

I. The

PART II.

212.
First truths as
to what relates
to essence.

1. The real essence of each thing is nothing but the thing itself, such as it has pleased God to make it. 2. Instead of this thing, God might create another that should partake more or less of the qualities of the first. 3. When God has created a thing, or being, with certain qualities, or prerogatives, in which that thing and the essence of it consist, we cannot suppose God to make it the same, without forming it with the same qualities, the same prerogatives, and the same essence; as he must then make the thing, and not make it, which cannot be said with the least shadow of reason. 4. The essence, which is nothing but the constitution of things such as God has made them, is generally impenetrable to our senses and understanding, at least in all its extent. 5. Represented essence, which is the idea of several principal qualities discovered by us in an object existing distinct from us, is as fixed by custom to a certain name: so that, if a sufficient number of those qualities be wanting to authorise changing the name of their united body, the essence is no longer considered the same.

CHAPTER V.

Particular observations with respect to the idea of essence, or similar essence.

IN determining the name that should be given to a thing, from certain circumstances or qualities of the thing itself, custom has not always determined precisely to what degree of change in those circumstances the thing is to preserve the same appellation: this occasions a frivolous perplexity in various minds with respect to essence. Thus, though an orange is stripped of the skin, custom still leaves it in possession of the name of orange: hence it is generally thought, that the essence of the orange is not then changed; but, if by pressure it is deprived of the juice, as it was deprived of the rind by peeling, all agree, that it would then be an orange no longer. With respect to its original state, however, its constitution or nature has suffered a change no less real by the loss of the rind than by that of the juice; but in one case the name of orange still remains, in the other not. It is this arbitrary change of name, that, for want of attention, is apt to be taken for a change of essence.

213.
The use of the name that indicates the essence, is often improperly determined.

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essence. Another striking example of this might be formed from the essence of wine, vinegar, and verjuice, which proves that we affix the idea of *essence of the same thing*, or of *the same essence*; to certain apparent qualities that are themselves, by custom, attached to a name in an arbitrary manner.

214.
Represented essence is applicable to many individuals.

Represented essence is applicable to many individuals; and, on this account, it is called by the name of *species*; because, as it results from the idea of a collection of certain sensible qualities, to which collection we have affixed a certain name, and as this very name and those qualities are applicable to many individuals, it is clear that they have thereby the same represented essence; but real or individual essence being nothing but the real constitution of each being, which in that constitution has something particular to distinguish it from every other being, it is evident, that the real essence can be applied to one being, and to one thing, only.

215.
We should not confound real essences with those represented.

Thus, when we represent to ourselves the essence of a circle or a triangle by an abstracted idea, and judge that every circle or triangle is truly, out of our minds, such as it is then represented in our minds, we fall into an error by which we confound the real with the represented essence; as there really does not exist any circle independent of matter, nor any circle materially existing

existing that is perfectly round as it is in our thought by an abstracted idea, (N^o. 49.) which forms, as has been said, *represented essence* or *species*. The essence of a real circle, existing out of our minds, is therefore nothing but the iron, wood, or ink, which exists in the figure of a circle that is never perfectly round, and forms a circle existing particularly different from every other particular circle existing: it is therefore a manifest error to give a real essence to abstracted ideas; or represented essence; that have no other existence but the substance of our souls, of which they are no more than the thoughts or modifications.

The Reader will be, perhaps, surprised that I have dwelt so long upon things that are of themselves evident, when they are viewed in a proper light; but, though this illustration consists only in ascertaining words or ideas, it will clear up those difficulties which have frequently perplexed or disturbed minds with regard to essence; and are, if I am not mistaken, the foundation of an ideal philosophy, which would vainly acquire celebrity at the expence of reality, and first truths that we should admit with regard to the essence of beings. This shall be more fully illustrated in the next chapter.

CHAPTER VI.

An enquiry into the manner by which the definition explains or contains the nature or essence of things.

216.
Ambiguity of
the word NA-
TURE.

THE principal difficulty we find in rightly comprehending what *nature* is, arises from the ambiguity of the word itself, or the different ideas that are affixed to it.

It signifies, 1st, The collective body of all the beings which the human mind is capable of knowing. 2. The universal principle that forms and governs that collective body: this principle however is nothing, at bottom, but God represented by the word Nature, as he is the principle of life and motion in every thing that affects us by the means of our senses. 3. The particular and immediate constitution that makes each being in particular what it is. 4. The disposition which is found in all beings, independent entirely of art and human will; and, in that sense, what is natural is contrary to artificial: thus we say, the water-fall that proceeds from a torrent is natural, and the fall of water from a cascade or fountain in a garden is artificial, as it is the effect of human industry. This shall be more fully explained

explained hereafter. 5. In fine, the word *nature* signifies the idea we form to ourselves of what is most immediately inherent in each thing, and which we express by definition: this is, as I have said, what is termed in the schools *metaphysical essence*, and what I have called *represented essence*, on which the following reflections may be made.

Though philosophers generally define the definition to be *a discourse that explains the nature of each thing*, it explains, in fact, much less the nature of the thing, than the signification of the word that indicates the thing. The signification, however, of a word that indicates a thing, is far from being the total and complete nature of the thing itself. In order to be more fully convinced of this, we have only to consider, that the name of each thing has been introduced into use by the common people, who are far from being philosophers, and who had no other idea in establishing a word, but to make known among themselves what they actually have in their minds, when they pronounce a certain word.

It is evident, moreover, that a word by its signification may enable us to distinguish the thing signified from all other things, without ascertaining or explaining its nature. For example, I shall readily make known what I understand by the word *sea*, by saying, that it is *a collection of*

217.
A word makes known a thing without explaining its nature.

PART II.

salt waters which occupy about one half of the surface of the earth: but, though I make it known in this manner, I neither comprehend nor explain its nature so fully as it is comprehended by an angel, or God: an evident proof, that the definition does not explain the nature of the thing in all its extent; but only the signification of words, to give a distinct idea of the objects we wish to treat of.

218.
Definition by
the genus and
difference.

We may here, after the example of Mr. Locke, usefully analyse the method established in the schools, of defining by the genus and difference: the *genus* comprehends what the thing defined has in common with other things; the *difference* contains what it has peculiar to itself, and in which nothing else has any share. This method is no more than a supplement to the enumeration of the various qualities of the thing defined; as, when we say of man, that he is a *rational animal*, the word *animal* includes the qualities of *moving, living, feeling, &c.* and only serves to supply the place of enumerating those different qualities.

219.
The enumeration
of qualities
is a kind of de-
finition.

This is so true, that, if there be no particular word to express all the qualities of the thing defined, we must then have recourse to the enumeration itself of the qualities: for example, if we want to define a *pearl*, it cannot be done by the simple exposition of a precise genus and difference, as is shewn in the definition of a man; be-
cause

cause there is no word that, in itself alone, includes all the qualities which a pearl has in common with other beings. Thus it happens that the method of defining by the means of the genus and difference, is the compendium or enumeration of the qualities that are discovered in the thing defined: but, as what is discovered is not the entire nature of the thing, the definition will be found to be nothing but the explanation of the true signification of a word, and of the meaning custom has affixed to it; and not of the effective, real, and total nature of the thing indicated by the word.

CHAPTER VII.

The difference between the definition of the word and that of the thing explained.

FROM what has been said above, a consequence may be deduced, that requires explanation: it is, that, as all definitions of a thing are nothing more than explanations of the word which signifies it, there should be no difference between defining the thing and defining the word; for, to define a word, is but to explain its signification; and to define a thing, is

220.
Definition of
the name, and
that of the
thing.

PART II.

221.
Their difference
is not what
many imagine.

likewise, according to our principles, only to explain the word that signifies it.

In answer to this, I say, there is a very great difference between what is commonly called *the definition of the name or word*, and the *definition of the thing*, although this difference is not what many people imagine. Both definitions are, in truth, no more than the explanation of the signification of a word: but the former is the explanation of a word of established use, agreeable to the ideas mankind in general have been pleased to affix to it; whereas the latter is the explanation of a word supposed arbitrary, which I freely apply as I think proper, without confining myself in any respect to established custom on the occasion; so that, according as inclination or occasion suggests, I affix to the word the number and quality of ideas which I declare to have actually in my mind. This appears to me sufficiently plausible to require no farther illustration.

222.
The definition
of a word ex-
plains, in one
sense, the na-
ture of the
thing.

This definition, however, of a word taken arbitrarily, may in a very just sense be called *the nature of the thing defined*; for then the definition perfectly expresses the nature of the thing I speak of and define, such as I conceive it; but what I conceive at the time is not always the true nature of the thing indicated by that word, according to established custom.

Thus,

Thus, when a person has defined gravity a natural tendency of bodies towards the centre, what has he done? He has explained, as well as he could, the signification of the word *gravity*, by expressing his ideas of the matter; but, as what he conceived is not at bottom the nature itself of the thing, we may say that he has given a wrong definition of it, because he has not explained the true meaning of the word *gravity* established by custom, but only what he in particular conceived by the word, and the idea he affixed to it.

To give another example. If a man, ignorant of the English language, should arbitrarily choose the word *triangle*, to express the idea of a circle he might really have in his mind, and declare, *I mean, by triangle, a round line in all parts equi-distant from a certain point*; it is manifest that this definition would very aptly express the nature of the thing the man actually had in his mind, which he called *triangle*, and we name *circle* in English: but we should look upon his definition as a mere verbal definition, because he would not have defined the thing indicated by the word *triangle* as it is generally understood.

It is proper, moreover, to observe that this nature, expressed by the definition of any word whatever, being once supposed, a chain of consequences may be thence deduced to form a sci-

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CHAP. VII.

223.

Newton.

224.

The definition of the name is the foundation of geometrical demonstrations.

PART II.

ence as true as Geometry, which is founded only on verbal definitions; as every geometrician begins with saying, I mean by the word *point* such a thing; by the word *line*, another thing: and by this definition of words, which are so many natures formed by the mind at will, he proceeds to the most profound knowledge, the remotest consequences, and the most infallible and evident demonstrations. It must, however, be remembered, that such truths have no other foundation but those imaginary natures arbitrarily formed by the mind, and do not therefore demonstrate or teach us the actual and true nature of things.

After having ascertained what constitutes the essence and nature of beings, as far as the human mind is capable, I flatter myself it will be no difficult task to distinguish their other attributes, and particularly their properties.

CHAPTER VIII.

Of properties.

PHILOSOPHERS usually give the name of property to that which *does not constitute the essence* of a thing, *but flows and is deduced from its essence*. We shall endeavour to investigate the exact meaning of this definition, in order to discover another first truth that is frequently misunderstood.

What has been observed in the definition of property, that it is *what flows and is deduced from the essence*, cannot be understood of the real and physical essence. Suppose, for example, as it is generally said, that to be capable of admiring is *a property of man*; this *capacity of admiring* is as inseparable from, and necessary to, man in his physical and real constitution, as his very essence of being a *rational animal*; so that he is not, in fact, in any degree more truly *a rational animal*, than he is one *capable of admiring*; and, if you really deprive him of this quality or *faculty of admiring*, you in fact divest him of that of being *a rational animal*, as whatever is *a rational animal* is necessarily

225.

Property belongs to the physical essence.

PART II.

226.
Essence and property differ only in arbitrary respects.

farily *capable of admiring*; and what is capable of admiring must of course be a rational animal.

The distinction between property and essence does not therefore consist in the real nature of beings, but in our conceptions of their necessary qualities; so that, which ever first presents itself to the mind, we consider as the *essence*, and those that do not occur so soon, or so readily, we look upon as properties.

I would not, however, take upon me to say, that, in various respects, or at least with regard to different minds, what is looked upon as the *essence* may not also be considered as a property: for, among different qualities, equally necessary and united together in the same being, it is very possible that one may occur first to some minds, and another to others. In that case, what is essence with the one, must be only a *property* with the rest; this would occasion a very idle distinction, or dispute. As the quality therefore that constitutes the *property*, and that which forms the *essence*, are found necessarily united; it appears to me, that the essence is equally derived from the property, and the property from the essence: any other distinctions are therefore below the attention of rational minds. We shall explain this matter by an example.

Should any one consider it as the essence of the *diamond* to be extremely hard, and its power of resisting

resisting the violent strokes of a hammer, as a property, I have no objection; but what pretensions has he to oppose me, if I choose to call *essence* its resistance to the violent blows of the hammer, and its extraordinary hardness *a property*? He will say, perhaps, that we conceive the hardness of the diamond before its power of resisting the hammer: my answer however is, that I first experienced, and consequently first conceived, the power in the diamond of resisting the strokes of the hammer; and that thence I drew the conclusion as to its hardness, which in that case is a secondary idea. In this curious dispute, I should be glad to know whether my opponent or I should have the better of the argument.

The only method of terminating the contest in a rational manner, would be to acknowledge that the property is the *essence*, and the *essence* the property; for, in fact, to be hard, and qualified to resist the strokes of a hammer, or being qualified to resist the strokes of a hammer, and being hard, are absolutely the same thing, under different aspects: the one has no privileges superior to the other, but such as chance, or my imagination, chooses to give it; and this is all that is necessary to distinguish *essence* from *property*: but, if the distinction is of so little importance, it may be asked

PART II.

asked whether it was an object that merited a moment's attention. To this we answer, that the most judicious occupation of a Philosopher is to dissipate the frivolous objections and difficulties of some philosophers.

CHAPTER IX.

Of qualities.

227.
Certain qualities are the essence of things, others not.

THE word *quality* is likewise apt to occasion many useless difficulties, when it is taken in the most general sense for the real attributes of a thing; that is, for those inherent peculiarities which are actually found therein, and may be asserted of it with truth. Certain qualities are then the essence of the things, and others not: thus, to be rational, and capable of admiring, are qualities inseparable from the real essence of man, or really essential to man: on the contrary, to be gay or great, to be a poet or painter, are qualities not necessarily included in the essence of man, supposing it to consist solely in being a rational animal.

228.
Whether mode or modification differs from quality.

It is not necessary to observe here, that all we call *modifications* or *modes of being*, are nothing but qualities; with this difference, that the word *quality*

lity is perhaps more frequently confounded with the *essence* of things, than the term *modification* or *mode*; as the latter more expressly shews, that the essence of the thing is already supposed to be so completely formed, that whatever modification is added, may be joined to it, or not, without changing its supposed natural essence. Thus, in supposing the essence of man to consist in being a rational animal, as this essence will still subsist, whether we add or do not add the quality of a poet or painter to it; it is evident that those are no more than simple modifications or qualities not essential: in like manner, by supposing the essence of the diamond to be its great hardness and lustre after it has been cut and polished, the qualities of red and yellow are to be considered only as simple modifications belonging to it.

Among qualities, there are some whose alternative constitutes the essence of a thing, though each of these qualities, taken separately, does not by any means form that essence. Thus, though it is a mere modification of matter, to be in motion rather than at rest; the *alternative*, however, of rest or motion, is not a simple modification, but a quality essential to matter.

I shall take notice elsewhere of what relates to qualities, with regard to the place of their residence, in order to examine whether certain qualities, such as form and colour, are in the external object that strikes

229.
Certain qualities form the essence by their alternative.

230.
Equivocations with respect to the place where qualities are situated.

PART II.

strikes our senses, or in ourselves who are affected by them. It is really laughable, that a mere equivocation should occasion such idle disputes among the philosophers of our days: this arises from the word *quality* being taken both for the disposition in the object adapted to make certain impressions on us, and for the impression itself that is made on us.

CHAPTER X.

Of unity or the multiplicity of beings.

UNITY is called that which makes a being *one*, and not many; and the idea of *unity* is one of those metaphysical points, in which men of the greatest capacity usually acknowledge the human mind to be lost, supposing it a thing impossible to be rightly explained.

231.
The idea of unity too simple to be explained.

I agree in opinion with them, that it is difficult to explain the nature of *unity*: nay more, I will even add that it is impossible to explain it; but why? Is it because it is a thing difficult or impossible to be comprehended? On the contrary, it is because nothing is so easy: for, as it is the most simple idea, and what perhaps first occurred to the mind,

my

my being *one*, and not *two* men, I immediately annexed to this idea a term which, as it expresses the simplest and plainest idea, cannot consequently admit of an explanation; because an explanation consists in elucidating an idea, by analysing the more simple ideas of which it is composed: whatever idea, therefore, is perfectly simple, cannot be explained by a more simple idea, and consequently cannot admit of any explanation. We may easily explain what a *thousand* is, to a person ignorant of the matter: it is only telling him that it is ten times a hundred; a hundred may be explained by saying that it is ten times ten; and, if he knows not what ten is, it is only shewing him ten unities on his ten fingers, and one on each: but, should he desire to have *one* and *unity* explained, then all explanation, even of the most ingenious man in the world, ceases at once, as there is nothing farther to be explained, there being no more complex ideas remaining; and nothing, consequently, that can form an idea and expression more precise and simple than that of unity.

If, with the generality of philosophers, we define *unity as a thing indivisible in itself, and divided from every thing else*; this definition will not furnish any idea more clear or distinct than the unity itself defined; and, if the idea of the thing does not become clearer by the explanation, it cannot

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cannot be properly called an explanation, nor consequently a definition; as a definition is nothing but words that explain the nature of a thing.

232.
The definition is more obscure than the thing explained, in such cases.

It appears evident, moreover, that none of the terms or ideas of the definition are clearer than the word *unity* itself. Do I, in fact, more fully comprehend what it is *to be divided from every thing else, and indivisible in itself*, than *unity*? And is there not as much reason and necessity for asking what is *to be indivisible in itself*, as for enquiring what it is to be one? Is it not even more difficult to explain and comprehend the former than the latter? Doubtless it is; nay, the greater part of mankind will not readily understand what is meant, when they are told of a thing indivisible in itself; and, if they happen to comprehend it, they never will be able to explain it better than by saying, that *to be indivisible in itself is to be one*. To make use of any other words, it is plain, would rather perplex than elucidate the matter; because, as has been already said, the most simple and familiar idea we can form is that of *unity*; and it cannot be otherwise expressed, but in terms more complicated and obscure; consequently the idea of unity can neither be explained, nor defined.

233.
People perplex themselves unnecessarily with regard to the notion of unity.

But, if the idea of unity is so easy, why do people daily ask what it is, and in what it consists? To this it may be answered, that men perplex them-

themselves unnecessarily; because they do not sufficiently consider the nature of the thing about which they desire information. Can any thing be more frivolous than an attempt to elucidate what is superlatively clear? What, in fact, constitutes in us that supreme light, the source of all other, which is universally acknowledged as such? Is it not the perception and knowledge we have of our own existence, which enables each of us to say with the fullest and clearest conviction, *I exist, I am, I think?* And this knowledge is in one sense the same with, or at least includes, the following: I am *one*, and *not two*; I am *myself* alone, and not another: for whoever says *myself*, says *one* to the exclusion of any other, and says *one* that is not two. To object to this, would be to object to *any thing being really what it is*; which would be a puerile objection, or rather downright nonsense. As, therefore, no person can refuse the title of first truth to the sense he has of his own existence, in like manner the idea of unity in himself is also a first truth.

Such is evidently the source of our idea of unity. I have therefore the clearest and most intimate idea of unity, and of plurality or multiplicity, which is contrary to it. The matter in itself, therefore, can admit of no doubt or perplexity

^{234.}
Source of the
idea of unity.

ART II.

235.
Unity is properly applicable to beings only, such as mine.

plexity with those who are unwilling to obscure or perplex it.

But an important reflection occurs on this occasion; and philosophers might have made the same, instead of spending their time in vain researches after the nature of unity, which is necessarily known to us; and it is, that this unity, so essential to us, is properly applicable only to beings such as mine, of which I have the immediate sentiment by my own existence. *I* alone, I say, and other beings like me, can be truly, properly, and formally *one*; as unity, taken in that sense, excludes, in the being in which it is found, every possibility of division.

236.
What I call *me* cannot be divided.

I cannot, in fact, without a degree of folly, imagine that my being, or what I call *me*, can be divided; for, were it possible that this *me* could be divided in two, it would then be *me* and not *me* at the same time: it would be so, as it is supposed; and would not be so, since each of the two parties must then become independent of the other: one might think, and the other not; that is to say, I might think and not think at the same time; which destroys every idea of *me* and of *myself*.

Besides, this *me*, and all other beings similar to this *me*, in whom *unity* is necessarily conceived, and where I cannot suppose any division without destroying their very essence, and every idea I can entertain

entertain of them, is what I call an *immaterial* or *spiritual* being; so that, by destroying its unity, you destroy its entire essence, and every idea of its existence. Divide a thought, a soul; or a mind in two, and you have no longer either thought, soul, or mind; for who can conceive one half, one third, or one fourth, of a thought, soul, or mind? This indivisibility is, moreover, evident to me by the interior sense of what I am; and, by the efficacy of the same sentiment, I likewise learn that what I call *me* is not properly what I call *my body*, as this body may be divided both from me, and in itself; whereas, with regard to *me*, I cannot be divided from myself.

1st, The substance of what actually constitutes my body, may be divided from me; for, as it is plain that I can exist without feet or hands, I must conceive that my soul from its nature might absolutely exist without each of the other parts of my body; though it should be the brain or the heart, which are, in fact, nothing but matter, like my foot and my hand.

Besides, can it be supposed that I am attached to the part called the *heart* or *brain*, when both the one and the other are no more than a collection of various particles of matter, that, after changing and wasting every moment, are continually repaired by nutrition, that is, are constantly succeeding each other? The collection

237.
The parts of my
body may be se-
parated from
me,

PART II.

that now forms what I call my *heart*, will be replaced by another collection some time hence; and the actual substance of my brain and heart, will then consequently be dispersed and entirely separate from me; and *I myself* shall however subsist. This *me*, therefore, is not essentially attached to any particular portion of a divisible substance.

238.
No part of the
body is of a na-
ture similar to
me.

Hence it manifestly follows, that no portion of the body, to which I am and appear to be attached, is of a nature similar to *me*; for it does not consist, like *me*, of *unity*; as all its substance, and whatever it is composed of, may as easily be *two* or *three* as *one*. The piece of matter which actually forms my heart is actually one piece; but, without either adding to, or diminishing in the least degree the nature of its substance, it may become *two*, *three* or *four* pieces; so that unity, in material and corporeal things, is neither an essential nor physical quality, but only relative to certain ideas, or a certain appellation; as a portion of matter may cease to be *one*, without changing its natural essence.

239.
The same real
substance is one,
or many, in dif-
ferent points of
view.

A drop of water is *one*: the very same substance of this drop of water, without being in the least altered, shall, if I choose, become *two* drops. Let us suppose a piece of matter two foot long, and that one foot is composed of iron, and the other of steel: this object or being may be *one* or

two,

two, as you like, according to the idea you shall form of it, or the name you please to give it. If, considering it in the whole, you think proper to call it a piece of *two* foot, it is *one*; but if, distinguishing each part, you choose to call it *two* different pieces that are joined together, it will then be *two*. All other *unities* or *pluralities*, with respect to bodies and matter, are of the same nature. We denominate *one*, in matter, what we are pleased to consider therein as the term of one of our ideas; but, if we think proper to consider the same object as forming various terms of our ideas, what was *one* will then become *many*: thus a house is *one*, because it is the object or term of a total idea, to which we give the name of *house*; and the same house, considered as the term of various ideas, by which I therein distinguish different apartments, stones, beams, &c. no longer remains a unity, but then becomes a collection of unities, and is no less *multiplicity* than *unity*; because, as it is substantially divisible, it may be divided without altering the nature of its substance.

The substance of a mountain is in like manner one or many, according as the imagination may be pleased to consider and call it: viewing it in a collective body, we call it *one*; but considering it as to the parts that form its substance, it becomes *many*, and we shall find as many

240.
We find as many
unities in it as
we like.

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unities in it as we may choose to divide it into parts: the greater or lesser closeness of union that may be between them, can never constitute any real unity.

In fact, their union is never closer than in the hardest body; but, however hard this may be, if it once comes to be separated, the same substance that was considered and called *one* piece, is then thought and called *two* or *three* pieces. It may after the same manner be considered or called *a thousand*, a hundred *thousand*, a hundred *millions*, and as many more as the mind chooses to form ideas of each particular part of the object; so that the same portion of matter, under different points of view, may be as justly deemed or named *one* as a *hundred*: circumstances that cannot be conceived of a spiritual substance; for, as no mind can be divided, neither can any mind ever be but *one*; and I cannot make me or myself the term of two ideas, without destroying the idea of myself.

CHAPTER XI.

Of identity and diversity.

THE identity of a thing is what occasions us to say it is the *same*, and no other. Hence it appears that *identity* and *unity* differ only in a certain respect as to time and place. A thing considered in various places, and at different times, being still found as it was before, is then said to be the *same thing*. If you were to consider it without any difference of time and place, you would simply term it *a thing*, or *one thing*; for, with regard to the same time and place, we say there is *a thing*, and not there is *the same thing*.

^{241.}
Identity differs from unity in a certain respect as to time and place.

We conceive different ideas of *identity* in different beings. We consider an intelligent substance always precisely the same, on account of its unity, or indivisibility; notwithstanding any modifications that may happen in it, such as its thoughts or sentiments. One and the same soul is not less precisely the same for experiencing changes of augmentation or diminution with respect to thoughts or sentiments: whereas, in corporeal beings, a portion of matter is no longer said to be exactly the same, when it continually receives an increase or change in its modifications, such as its form and motion; but if, in a material being, augmented, diminished, or altered,

^{242.}
Identity is different in different beings.

PART II.

tered, we considered any part that remained without alteration, it is evident that, with respect to that particular part, it would be still justly called *the same*.

243.
Resemblance
taken for identity.

It must be however observed, that custom admits an *identity* of resemblance, which is often confounded with the real identity. For example, when we fill two glasses with wine, we say it is the *same* wine in each glass; and when we have two coats made from the same piece of cloth, we say they are both of the *same* cloth. This identity is only in *resemblance*, and not in *substance*; for the substance of the one may be destroyed without the least alteration in the substance of the other. By resemblance also, two things are said to be the *same*, when one succeeds the other by an imperceptible, but still real change; so that they are two substances entirely different.

244.
The substance
of the same river
changes continually.

Thus the substance of the river Thames imperceptibly changes every day, and we still call it the same river; though the substance of the water which forms that river, changes and flows off every moment. In like manner, the ship of Theseus continued still to be called the same ship, when after repeated repairs there did not remain a single piece of timber of which it had been originally built. Again, what we call the same body of a man at the age of fifty, contains perhaps no part of the substance which composed the body

of the same man when the man was no more than six months old: this may be clearly seen by physical experiments with regard to nutrition, which shew, that, in material things, there is commonly no more than an identity of resemblance, that may be mistaken for an identity of substance by the equivocal meaning of the word. However trifling this observation may appear, its importance may be discovered from a reflection of Baile in his Critical Dictionary: he shews, that this pitiful equivocation is the foundation of the whole famous system of Spinoza, which supposes the same substance in all beings; * a foundation surely that does infinite honour to those pretended great philosophers, who, in attempting to rise superior to common sense, stumble at the very first step, and shew that they do not comprehend their own words, by the first proposition they make in following Spinoza. Mr. Locke, on the other hand, advances another paradox, which is this: *if a spiritual being, says he, had lost all remembrance of what it was before, it would be no longer the same.* We shall examine elsewhere the nature and consequences of an opinion so new and singular.

To proceed, identity with respect to bodies, as I have observed, is properly no more than relative to certain particulars, or certain modes of speaking, which occasion a thing to be called
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* Baile, Crit.
Dict. Art. *Spinoza*, Letter *L*.

A thing of which we may deny or affirm what cannot be denied or affirmed of another thing, is distinct from that other thing.

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245.
Whether particles of matter can possess an absolute identity.

the *same*; though, in the main, the substance of this thing, reputed the same, often changes while it preserves this relative and nominal identity.

Some people have asked, whether a particle of matter, so minute as to be imperceptible to all the sagacity of our senses, might not still possess an essential and permanent identity. By admitting this system, an imperceptible particle of matter would, of itself, be the essence or seed of some particular being, and not of any other being. It is supposed, for example, that God had placed, in the single person of Adam, a number of particles, as so many seeds sufficient to produce all the future generations of men and human bodies that may exist in the world: there is, say they, no difficulty in this hypothesis; nor can it be combatted by the difficulty of comprehending how such numberless millions of human bodies could have been contained in that of Adam, since we have it demonstrated, that the most minute particle may be divided into millions of other particles still less, and multiplied beyond any number of men that can ever exist in the world. Each particle thus being the seed and essence of each human body, it might be enlarged and expanded by adventitious parts, and lose nothing however of its essence, its unity, or identity.

This

This system appeared convenient to some towards explaining, not only the nature and identity of bodies, but likewise their substantial forms, which have been treated of so many centuries. But it must be observed, that those particles of matter, which should be supposed the seed and essence of each thing, would, though imperceptible, be always divisible; as they would be corporeal and material. In their division, however, would they remain the seed and essence of each thing? If they should not remain such, the identity and essence of a thing might then change every moment, since the particle that constitutes the identity would no longer be precisely the same as before; as the essence of a circle is no longer a circle after a division, but only the half, or quarter, &c. of a circle. Thus, after the division of an *identical* particle, there would remain no more than a half, or quarter, &c. of the identity and essence. If it be said, that, even after the division of the identity, it still remains the same in each of its parts so divided; the conclusion must be, that, in a single seed or identity of human bodies, there will actually be an infinite number of human bodies; and wheresoever chance may throw them, whether upon a stone, or an oak, there so many human bodies must remain,

It

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It might be imagined, that Providence had provided a remedy against those inconveniences, in placing those identical and essential particles, by their extraordinary minuteness, out of the reach of other corporeal particles, which, from their unwieldy figure and motion, should have no hold on particles incomparably more delicate; but those delicate particles might they not break and divide each other, even by an accidental collision, or mutual shock? and would not the identity and essence of the same body, in that case, be dispersed on all sides? By that means, the very particle that was but the essence of one body, might become, in its division, a thousand essences of the same body, which, I must own, I have not capacity to comprehend.

If those considerations, however, do not shew us the identity and essence of things, they at least clearly demonstrate the limits of our understanding; for it is absolutely lost in this infinite divisibility of matter, which it is equally impossible for us to comprehend or deny. This leads us to speak of infinity, and all that is comprised therein.

CHAPTER XII.

Of finite and infinite.

IT is disputed, whether we naturally have an idea of *infinite*. In order to elucidate the question, we may distinguish, with scholastics, two sorts of *infinity*: one is termed *infinity in power*, and the other *absolute infinity*. The first, in my opinion, consists in this, that a being, however great or small it be supposed, may still be conceived to possess more greatness or minuteness than we can conceive, even after the utmost stretch of thought and calculation. The second infinity consists in a thing having actually and absolutely such a degree of greatness or minuteness as is superior to any idea we can form. Some persons, in other terms which imply the same thing, define infinity in power as finite in what it actually is, and infinite in what it may be, or may become: and, on the other hand, absolute infinity is what, in its entire and actual state, is actually infinite.

It is evident, that we naturally have an idea of the first infinity; for we conceive nothing so great, to which we cannot add superior degrees of

Two kinds of
infinite.

246.

We have an
idea of the first,
but not of the
second.

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of greatness beyond what are present to our imagination: the same may be said with respect to minuteness.

As to the second infinity, it does not appear that we can form any idea of it; for it is impossible to imagine an object so great, to which we may not, in idea, add new degrees of greatness beyond what we have present to our imagination.

247.
In thinking of
God, we form
only the idea of
infinity in power.

You conceive a God, it will be said, who possesses this absolute infinity; but the question is, whether I do conceive him as such. I very well conceive a first being, from whom the rest must have derived their being, and who consequently has from himself all that is in theirs: I also conceive, that he is possessed of so great virtues and power as are beyond every idea I can form: but this, upon reflection, I find to be nothing but *infinity in power*; whereas, in order to comprehend *absolute infinity*, I should conceive the full extent of the attributes of God, and the whole of God himself, if I may so express myself: I must conceive so many attributes in him, as to make it impossible for me to imagine more, or a greater number, than I should actually conceive: but this is what I cannot do; for I am sensible that I can conceive in God virtues, and degrees of virtues, still greater and greater; and, after conceiving the greatest number I can possibly imagine, it must

must still be a determinate number; and, of course, I may imagine another still superior. It is impossible for me, therefore, to conceive so many virtues, but the number or extent of them must still remain finite in my idea; otherwise God would be no greater than I can conceive him, which is directly contrary to what we judge, and ought to judge, of the nature and infinity of God.

But it will be said perhaps, that, in having once an idea of God, we cannot conceive more virtues than are comprehended under that idea: to which I answer, that we have not this idea of God, such as it is imagined to be by certain philosophers; for our idea is not proportioned to the whole extent of the object which is God. Will it be added, that the idea is then false, since it is not conformable to its whole object? The conclusion is not just: an idea is not false, when the mind of itself conceives an object distinct from it, as fully as it is capable of conceiving it, though it should not conceive whatever may be possibly known of the object in the most perfect extent. An idea is always just, when it enables us clearly to distinguish its object from every other object, by shewing us what it has peculiar to itself. Were there no just or true ideas, but such as enable us to comprehend objects distinct from us, according to the fullest

CHAP. XII.

248.
We have not an idea of God that is adequate to the whole extent of the object.

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extent of what they are in their nature, and as far as they may possibly be known, we should have no true idea; for God alone conceives objects as fully as they can be conceived. If we had, in this sense, a *true idea* of God, we should comprehend God as perfectly as he knows himself; and our intelligence would then be infinite like his.

249.
Speaking of absolute infinity, we have no idea but of a thing incomprehensible.

But it may be asked, what I conceive when I speak of *absolute infinity*: Will it be said, that we must comprehend it, and have an idea of it, since we understand one another when we pronounce the words *absolute infinity*, to which we affix a different meaning from what we do to the words *infinity in power*? But the meaning we affix to absolute infinity can be nothing but the idea itself of absolute infinity.

The answer to this objection is easy. By *absolute infinity* I understand an extent so great, that I actually suppose my imagination incapable of making any addition to it: but the supposition itself is false; for it is impossible for me to conceive in any object so great a degree of perfection, as that I cannot add to it in idea or thought. When, therefore, I make use of the terms *absolute infinity*, I mean thereby to express a thing incomprehensible: I comprehend what I say; and what I say are words that indicate an object which I acknowledge to be above my
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comprehension. This is the manner in which I CHAP. XII.
understand what I say in pronouncing the words
absolute infinity.

I can readily believe; that this infinity actually and truly exists, as I can suppose or believe the existence of things of which I neither have, nor can have, an idea; in like manner as a man, born blind, supposes that there are colours, but of which he has no idea; yet he can, and does sometimes, make use of the word *colour*, to denote a thing which is incomprehensible to him: so, in speaking of a sixth sense which God might have given to man besides the five with which he has endowed him, I speak of this sixth sense; though I am ignorant what it might be; and the only idea I have of it, is the idea of something I do not understand, and which would be indicated by the words, *sixth sense*. Thus, I speak both of *absolute infinity*, and of God who is absolutely infinite, without being able to comprehend his absolute infinity, but only an infinity in power, which in him is really an absolute infinity to me, however incomprehensible, and of which I have no idea, unless of a very great perfection, of which it is impossible for me to discern the limits, and conceive the extent, without still having an idea of any thing beyond what I conceive of it, though I see that there is really something beyond. In like manner, says

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Mr.

PART II.

Mr. Locke, a pilot, sounding the sea with the longest cord he can procure, has indeed an idea of a very great depth beyond what he has measured; but he has not a true and just idea of the precise depth of the sea.

Puffendorf, in his Duties of Man, Book I. Chap. IV. p. 55, makes a reflection on the same subject, that is alone sufficient to answer every objection; it is in substance as follows: Though it be justly said that God is infinite, this idea we form of him is not however a full and perfect conception; for absolute infinity does not properly mark any quality that we perceive in the thing itself to which we ascribe it, but only the weakness of our own understanding, and the incapacity of our mind to comprehend all the greatness and extent of the nature and essence of such being.

250.
Those who say
that they have
an idea of abso-
lute infinity,
contradict them-
selves in infinite
number.

As to those who pretend they have an idea of absolute infinity, I would willingly ask them, when they have comprehended, for example, absolute infinity in numbers, whether it may not be still possible to add another number: if they say it is not possible, their own conscience will give them the lye; and if they declare it is possible, their pretended absolute infinity is destroyed; as I call absolute infinity an extent to which nothing can be added, and cannot possibly be conceived greater. What is said of absolute

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infinity as to number, is equally applicable to every other absolute infinity.

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This shews us how much reason is disgraced by those who argue about matters; of which they neither do, nor can, say any thing but what is incomprehensible. What honour, in fact, do men acquire to themselves by asking seriously, whether one infinity be greater than another? They must not even see, that the word *greater* is a relative term, used to express how far one of two things surpasses the other, or is surpassed by it, in a determinate degree known to us: so that the greatness of things that admit of no determinate degree, is a greatness beyond the reach of our comprehension, and with regard to which it is evident we comprehend nothing but that it is above our capacity.

251.
Whether one
infinity is great-
er than another.
This is a frivo-
lous question.

But is it not manifest, say they, that, if there were an infinite number of men, the number of the hairs on their heads must be an infinity still superior to that of the men themselves? To this I answer, that, in a limited and determinate number of men, I see plainly that there must be more hairs than men: but with respect to an infinite number of men, a thing above my comprehension, I am as much at a loss to conceive the attributes of which it is or might be susceptible; and consequently I do not see, neither can I see, whether it is susceptible of more or less;

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as I never could ascertain the more, or the less, but by finite numbers that are within the compass of my understanding. Nothing is, I think, more capable of giving a wrong turn to the mind, and introducing false arguments, than absurd discussions of this kind; for, by endeavouring to exercise our rational faculties on such matters, we are gradually led to mistake chimeras for reason, and reason for chimeras: whereas, by solely confining ourselves to things within the reach of our capacity and understanding, we are enabled, by a little attention and care, to distinguish true ideas of things from false, so as to acquire sure guides in all our opinions, and for every part of our conduct. I may venture to say, that it is for want of adhering to this maxim, that libertinism and extravagant opinions have ravaged the minds of so many. This consideration leads us to regret the time spent by many philosophers in debating questions; especially when they neither discerned nor acknowledged this first truth, that absolute infinity is an object which it is impossible for our finite capacity ever to comprehend, and of which a judicious man should say nothing but that it is incomprehensible to his understanding.

C H A P.

CHAPTER XIII.

Of what is possible and impossible.

POSSIBILITY, in its fullest extent, should be joined to the article of infinity; for, by considering that whatever is possible is such that it is impossible to conceive more of it, it is evident, in such respect, that possibility is infinity; nay, it is even the infinity of the power of God.

^{252.}
Possibility is
infinity.

Our Readers must not wonder, after what has been laid down in the preceding chapter, if we are at a loss to answer this question, *Can every thing that is possible exist?* For taking possibility thus, in all its latitude, whatever answer we may give, it will remain an abyss impenetrable to the mind. If it be said, that whatever is possible cannot exist, from that very circumstance it is not then possible: if, on the other hand, it be declared, that whatever is possible can exist, we may then suppose its existence. Now, according to this supposition, nothing will be possible beyond what must exist by the supposition, which appears evidently false: for, in short, how great soever the number of things may be that

^{253.}
Whether all
that is possible
can exist.

PART II.

should exist, a possibility will still remain, as omnipotence can never be exhausted; and consequently all the possibility that might be supposed to exist, would not however exist.

This then is what our mind cannot ascertain; because, as possibility is *infinity*, it is above the reach of our understanding, which is lost and confounded in such contemplation.

254.
What kind of argument is this? God is possible, therefore he exists.

We may here palpably see the weakness of that pretended demonstration of the existence of God, which has exercised the thoughts of so many, either in attacking or defending it. The dispute perhaps is still subsisting, for want of the reflection made here. When Des Cartes endeavoured to prove the existence of God, that is, of a being actually infinite, he argued thus: *God exists, if it be possible*: it is possible; therefore he does exist.

255.
An infinite being possible is an object that we do not comprehend.

I know the various answers given to this argument; but I think the shortest and most plausible may be drawn from what I have advanced with respect to possibility. In fact, when I am told that an infinite being, considered as an absolute infinity, *is possible*, my mind is equally lost in the subject and attribute of the proposition; for both the term *infinite*, and the word *possible*, taken in all their latitude, are objects, by their infinity, beyond the utmost reach of my capacity. As I have therefore no comprehension of them,

them, I know neither what to deny nor affirm with respect to them. We may thence likewise discern the fallacy of the following argument: *An infinite being is possible, as it is not impossible; and it is not impossible, as we can discern no impossibility in it*: for, in short, the thought of a mind so limited as ours cannot justly ascertain whatever is possible or impossible. As possibility and impossibility, in their utmost latitude, are infinite, they manifestly surpass the reach of our understanding, which is lost and bewildered therein. It is therefore clear, that, with respect to the infinite being considered as such, and with regard to his possibility, our mind can neither affirm nor deny any thing, without being guilty of rashness and presumption.

Some people are deceived with regard to *possibility*, because it may be either considered in its utmost extent, or confined to particular and finite objects, the ideas of which do not surpass our understanding. In the latter point of view we might judge of the possibility of a being. We must however be very circumspect as to the various meanings of which the word *possibility*, or the contrary term *impossibility*, is susceptible.

Scholastics distinguish three kinds of impossibilities, which it is proper to consider. 1st. An impossibility in consequence of a supposition or hypothesis. This relates to a thing possible in

256.
Possibility that is not infinite is within the reach of our capacity.

257.
Three sorts of impossibility.
1st. Of formal supposition.

PART II.

itself, but impossible in consequence of a supposition that has been formed, and is still continued; for example, it is very possible I may walk out to-morrow; but if I suppose that I shall not walk out, and that God, who is omniscient, foresees that I shall not go out, it is, according to this supposition, impossible for me to walk out to-morrow, as the supposition includes an impossibility; but that I may go out to-morrow, whilst it is supposed at the same time that I shall not go out a walking to-morrow: again, it is very possible that I may be actually standing at present; but, if it be supposed that I am actually sitting, it is consequently impossible, according to this supposition, that I should be actually standing.

The second impossibility resembles the first, and only exists under certain regards, or tacit suppositions: thus it is impossible for me to be deceived by the united evidence of my senses, when the organs of those senses are in proper order; but it is with reference to the natural order of things that the supposition is tacitly made: when I therefore say, that it is impossible for what I have now before my eyes not to be writing, I tacitly suppose that God does not actually perform a miracle.

258.
The definition
of an absolute
impossibility is
liable to error.

The third impossibility is the only absolute impossibility, and that can be properly so called:

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it is commonly defined, *that which implies a contradiction*. This definition is supposed to be so clear, that it can admit of no ambiguity: it gives rise, however, to an important and frequent error. In fact, we mistake sometimes what includes a contradiction, for what appears to us to imply a contradiction; and, on other occasions, that which does not appear to include a contradiction, for what in reality includes none.

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A man invented a very ingenious machine for the discovery of the perpetual motion, and challenged all the learned to shew any impossibility or contradiction in the invention. In order to justify his system, he adduced demonstrations equal to the clearest geometrical proofs. For completing the machine, nothing remained wanting, but an artist that could make a piece of leather capable of sustaining a certain weight of quicksilver: this workman however is still to be found. But, is it not in that very article itself that really consisted the contradiction, which was neither in the mind of the machinist, nor of those who thought his project demonstrated? What was in their fancy was a demonstration; but there was a something in the reality, that was not in their minds. They supposed leather might be had capable of sustaining a certain weight of quicksilver; it is only making the leather strong enough, said they: but, while ever it is leather,

it

259.
The perpetual motion demonstrated to be possible in speculation.

PART II.

it will be too weak to support the weight of quicksilver: it would be necessary therefore to have leather that should not be leather, at least naturally, though the mathematician supposed it such naturally; for he did not seek the perpetual motion by virtue of a preternatural power: thus there were both contradiction and impossibility in the thing and reality, though neither was in the mind.

260.
A thing does
not cease to be
impossible,
though we may
see no contra-
diction in it.

It is the same with regard to a thousand objects distinct from us, that are not intimately known to us. We thence form combinations which we boldly assert to contain no contradiction, because it is impossible for us to discover any: but, if the first causes that constitute the nature of things, were fully present to our minds, we should often perceive an incompatibility we do not discern, as we see not their sensible qualities: for those are often united to other insensible qualities above our capacity; and we cannot judge of their reciprocal relation or incompatibility. Chymists see no contradiction in the transmutation of iron into gold: neither do I; but I cannot therefore take upon me to say that there is none: it would be necessary for me to attain to the knowledge of the first radical particles that constitute both iron and gold, and the respective nature of each, that I might discover whether it can be naturally common to those two metals: if

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it cannot, it is a contradiction to say that iron may be naturally changed into gold. Besides, I cannot judge whether this be possible, unless experience comes, which is not yet come, or at least is very dubious; and therefore I cannot decide with certainty whether there be any contradiction or not in such a transmutation. When, therefore, people affirm positively that no impossibility is to be found in this matter, it is only saying that they can see none; but it does not therefore follow, but that such impossibility may actually exist; for, though the ideas we at present form in our minds, both of gold and lead, are not incompatible, and by no means mutually destroy each other, they do not shew us what gold and lead are, according to the whole extent of their nature.

From those principles it follows, that, with respect to all beings, particularly those distinct from, and not intimately known to us, we cannot deduce this consequence, *I see no contradiction therein, therefore there is none*: and this we should admit as a first truth.

But, if I see a contradiction and impossibility, may I not then conclude that there are such, in fact? Yes, if you see them; but, in order to be convinced that you see them, the object must be within the reach of your capacity. Thus, when the Socinians find a contradiction in what religion

261.
We cannot see a contradiction or impossibility in a thing if it be above our capacity.

PART II.

religion teaches us of the mystery of the Trinity, they judge contrary to the very rules of natural reason: for religion proposes this mystery to us as being the infinite nature of God himself, which is above the utmost reach of our comprehension; and natural reason directs us not to judge of objects beyond our capacity.

262.
Le Clerc has
made choice of
a wrong exam-
ple of contradic-
tion.

In like manner, Le Clerc, in his logical work, has made a very injudicious choice of an example of contradiction, in the multiplication of the same body, such as catholics believe it in the mystery of the Eucharist: for, without mentioning the multiplication of the loaves, that the gospel obliges us to admit; as one and the same body multiplied, is in a supernatural and miraculous state, it is consequently beyond the natural reach of our understanding; and it is not in those respects such as we represent it to ourselves by a natural idea, which is always defective with regard to a supernatural object.

If other authors had made this reflection, with respect to the mysteries of religion, they would have avoided many arguments with which they captivated superficial minds, but which can have no difficulty when men are capable of penetrating and discovering first truths, and the first ideas that are acquired by a just analysis of our thoughts.

CHAP.

CHAPTER XIV.

Of what is perfect or imperfect.

ACCORDING to some philosophers, nothing is more natural to the mind than the idea of *perfection*; and it is so clear, that no one can be mistaken in it. In order to be convinced that their thoughts are just, we should first see them endeavour at least to explain certain ambiguities which manifestly occur in the word *perfect* or *perfection*.

No person will, I think, dispute that the most proper meaning of the word *perfect* is, to express the nature of a work which possesses in itself sufficient qualities for accomplishing the ends for which it was designed by its author. Thus verses composed to please, are perfect if they actually please: a house built for lodging commodiously, is perfect if it really be commodious for lodging. In like manner, a man created for the purpose of devoting himself entirely to the knowledge and service of God, is perfect if he be entirely employed in that divine occupation.

But this definition of *perfect*, the clearest perhaps, and the most precise that can be given, is by no means suitable to God: for, 1st, God is not

263.
Whether the
idea of perfec-
tion is clear.

264.
To be perfect is
to accomplish
the end for
which the
thing is intended
by its author.

265.
This definition
is not suitable
to God.

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a work. 2dly, He has not been *created* or *designed* by an author, as he could have none: whatever he does, or may do, is always that he was designed for, if we may so express ourselves; though, to speak properly, we should never use such expressions. We should therefore seek, with respect to God, an idea of perfection that is by no means the most common and plausible idea affixed to the word *perfect*.

266.
What is perfection in God.

Thus in God we call perfection each of the attributes we esteem and think we should suppose in him. We might with still greater precision call perfection in God the collection of all his attributes; for, were we to suppose any one of them separate from the rest, we should not find perfection in God: so that here are, of God himself, two ideas of perfection. In fine, we suppose all those attributes in God in so eminent a degree as to surpass all our conceptions: and this again is a third idea of perfection in God. Those ideas of perfection are not therefore so easy or simple, as some people would fain imagine: for in a *simple* idea there is nothing that requires distinction or explanation; and every attempt to distinguish or explain it, only serves to involve it in perplexity and confusion.

267.
Perfection is what we suppose should be in every thing.

What is, however, common to the three ideas of perfection we have distinguished in God, must be observed; that is, we suppose they should be

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in God : and even this again furnishes us with an idea of perfection that is both just and plausible ; that is, we call *perfection* all we suppose should be in each thing, and that is suitable to it.

Thus, if we suppose that a circle should be composed of a line equally distant in every part from the centre, we call a circle perfect that is actually so formed. Though we suppose that a man should have two hands, and five fingers on each hand, we do not consider him perfect, however, whether he has one hand or three, whether each hand has four fingers only, or six. Again, supposing that a monster should have something very extraordinary : if a man were to be found with a hundred hands like Briareus, and his whole body covered with eyes like Argus, or any thing still more frightful, we should then say this is a perfection ; the *perfection* indeed of a *monster*, but still a perfection, as we should find in the monster all that we suppose should be in him, and is suitable to such a being.

Some persons imagine they elucidate the idea of perfection taken in a general sense, by saying, that *perfection* is an advantage to which we can neither make nor desire any addition : but, in that sense, perfection is nothing else but infinite felicity ; as it is to that alone we can neither make nor desire any addition : and, as we have observed, that infinity is an object of which the human

263.
Whether per-
fection is such,
that nothing
can be added
to it.

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269.
Whether per-
fection is prefe-
rable to the con-
trary.

human mind can have no comprehension, it will be a task no less difficult for us to comprehend perfection:

After these definitions nothing remains but to examine that which is commonly used in the schools; where it is said, *perfection is that which, in itself, is preferable to the contrary, or its privation.* This definition, which appears so clear and precise to some people, is not, I think; so much so as it is commonly supposed; for, when we thus talk of perfections, it is plain that we speak of qualities one of which is preferable to the other. Let me then ask, whether it be only in particular respects, or on certain occasions; that the one is preferable to the other? If a quality be thus found perfection only in certain respects, it will no longer remain a perfection in itself, and by its own peculiar nature; what is so by its nature, and in itself, cannot cease to be the same on any occasion, or in any respect whatever: but if, independent of every occasion, supposition, and respect; it should be asked, Which is preferable in itself, rest or motion, action or inaction? I think the question must either be incomprehensible or frivolous; for action and inaction are preferable to each other only with respect to certain beings, times, places, and circumstances, in which action or inaction, motion or rest, may be found: so that, with regard to

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certain beings or times, action or motion, would be preferable; and they would be the reverse with respect to certain other beings and times. We must therefore find out qualities of such a nature as are, independent of every respect and all occasions, preferable to what are the contrary. First then, it is certain that there are none of this nature in corporeal things, with respect to which soft, in itself, is not preferable to hard, long to broad, motion to rest, &c. We must therefore necessarily allow, that, in regard to them, there are no perfections but what are either relative, or built upon supposition, as I have already explained them; that is, with respect either to the use for which they are designed, to the arbitrary esteem in which they are held by men, or to certain names or expressions that have been introduced as it were by chance.

With respect to minds, it appears that there are qualities which it is better to possess than not; but, if we consider rightly, we shall find that, excepting one only, they are not such absolutely in themselves, but always with a reference to another quality, which alone it is absolutely better to have than not; and that in every respect whatever, under every supposition that can be formed, and in all circumstances in which it may be considered; and this quality is *to be happy*, as fully and as long as possible. Such is, I say, the

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270.
What quality,
taken in itself,
is preferable to
the contrary.

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271.
Immortality a
perfection rela-
tive to happi-
ness.

only absolute perfection that is preferable to its contrary, with respect to all, in every respect, on all occasions, and in all circumstances that can possibly be supposed.

Should it be asked, for example, whether it is better for a mind to be *immortal* than *mortal*; I would directly answer, Yes, it would, from the disposition of all men to annex the idea of misery to death; because, in the state they are in, it is, in fact, a pain and misfortune to them to die, as they are attached to a life they love to preserve. From a similar cause likewise, they join the idea of immortality to happiness; but, if I separate them, and unite the idea of immortality with misery, I then alter my opinion, and naturally conform it to the oracle of Jesus Christ, relative to a wicked man destined by the Author of Nature to be immortal, and by his own transgressions to be miserable; and I will say, after the truth incarnate, that it would have been not only better for that man not to have been immortal, but that he never had been born: *melius ei esset, si non natus fuisset*. As therefore immortality, in a certain respect, may become much more fatal than mortality, it is not true that immortality, taken in itself precisely and absolutely, is preferable to mortality; for what is so, in itself, absolutely, can never cease to be the same, under all circumstances, and in every respect whatever.

Immor-

Immortality then, in certain circumstances, and in a particular respect, is not preferable to the contrary quality. Immortality consequently is not an absolute perfection, but only a perfection in reference to felicity, which it supposes, to which it relates, and of which it is considered as a part or continuation.

CHAP. XIV.

I might say as much, in proportion, of wisdom and power, if it were possible to conceive them distinct from happiness: but that would be a chimera; for those qualities are either felicity itself, considered under different faces, such as they are in God, or qualities united with happiness, either for acquiring or enjoying it: for, to speak only of created beings, which are more within the reach of our capacity, what is *wisdom* with respect to them, if it be not a quality that urges them to pursue the road leading to the ultimate and true end of every spiritual being, which is happiness, according to the unanimous opinion of philosophers? Wisdom is then a disposition to attain happiness, or to enjoy it; and what would really be a wisdom that should lead us to real misery, or be capable of continuing us in it? Would it not then lose all title to the name of wisdom?

272.
Wisdom, power,
and means of felicity.

This is more strongly evinced with respect to power, knowledge, and other similar qualities. It is certain, that we look upon them as perfec-

PART II.

tions no farther than as they may contribute to our satisfaction and happiness. Should we really be more perfect, for being invested with power, or enlightened by knowledge, that would contribute nothing to our happiness, or that would only serve to make us miserable? Is it not better, for example, to be deprived both of power and understanding, than to possess them in the same manner as the infernal spirits, in whom those qualities serve only to revive and augment continually their rage and despair? But if these qualities were, essentially in themselves, and by their nature, preferable to the contrary, it would be impossible to suppose or imagine any circumstance in which it would be more eligible not to have either knowledge or power than to possess them. In like manner, a circle being in itself absolutely round by its essence and nature, it is impossible to suppose or imagine any respect or circumstance in which a circle is not round: from a single circumstance of that kind, a circle would not be round essentially, and of itself. As there are then circumstances in which it would be better not to possess either power or knowledge, than to have them, those two qualities are not essentially such as to make it more eligible to have them than to be deprived of them; but they are such only in a certain respect, that is, relative to the idea we have that know-

knowledge instructs, as to the means of acquiring happiness; and power puts us in possession of them. CHAP. XIV.

Hence, what is preferable to the contrary, absolutely in itself, essentially, and independent of every respect and circumstance, and consequently what should only and strictly be esteemed *absolute* perfection, is happiness alone, and what contributes thereto.

Felicity, however, is not confined to a content and satisfaction such as we are sensible of in this world, where we find by experience, that something is always wanting, or to be wished for. A greater happiness is preferable to the contrary, that is, to a less happiness; therefore felicity is not an absolute perfection, unless in so exalted a degree as to be preferable to every other degree; and a degree so exalted is what surpasses all our ideas; it is a degree that is infinite and beyond our comprehension: for, could we comprehend it, it would thence be finite, and we should be able to measure, compare it, and distinguish a degree superior to it; therefore it would not be absolute perfection.

What is said as to the degree of happiness, must be understood of its duration; whence I conclude, that perfection, the only absolute perfection, taking it strictly and precisely according

^{273.}
Felicity is not
of short dura-
tion.

PART II.

to the definition, is essentially preferable to its contrary, and consists in supreme and eternal felicity.

274.
The idea of perfection little understood by some persons.

In those reflections relative to perfection, I fear that several philosophers will not perceive their usual ideas of this object; but I know not what those among them will think, who found a proof of the existence of God on the term so equivocal, and the idea so indeterminate, as that of *perfection*, when they say, that God is a collection of perfections; that the collection of perfections is possible; and that, as it is possible, it must exist; for, if it did not exist, it would not be possible. We may see this argument contains much ambiguity in the word *perfection* or *perfections* in God; for, after what has been urged, this pretended demonstration can mean nothing more than that it is impossible but a being supremely and eternally happy must exist: but, in addition to what is usually advanced in order to explain this sophism, we will further say, that the *perfection* we are here speaking of, as well as *possibility* and *eternity*, are so many infinities of which our narrow and finite minds can form no clear idea; as they cannot judge clearly but of objects proportioned to their capacity, and the extent of their knowledge, which are very far from being infinite.

To

To conclude this article; *perfection*, in inanimate things, is no more than what is supposed best adapted to the ends for which they are designed: and, in spiritual beings, perfection is nothing else but true happiness, and what is supposed to lead more directly to it, or to render it more durable and complete.

CHAP. XV.

CHAPTER XV.

Of good, or what is good.

IF a proper attention be given to what has been before observed with regard to *perfect* and *perfection*, little will be necessary to be said as to the nature of *good* and *goodness*. *Good* and *goodness* then is nothing but what makes us happy, or contributes to it.

^{275.}
Good relates to
perfection.

If it be not already clear to the Reader how far this definition is applicable to all that is termed *good*, a few reflections will assist us in explaining our ideas of the subject.

Of whatever thing we say *it is good*, it is always with respect to an end. When God said, with regard to the creatures he had newly made, *he saw it was good*, we cannot doubt but these

^{276.}
What is good is
relative to an
end which is
happiness.

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words meant, *it was proper, and adapted to the end God proposed.*

It is the same in the most common and ordinary matters: for example, when those who are no philosophers say, *this wine is good*, or *that sword is good*, it is still with a view to some end: this wine is good; that is to say, this wine is proper, and adapted to give me pleasure and health by drinking it: *that sword is good*; that is, it is properly made for repelling an enemy, or defending one's self against him. With a little attention we shall find, that we never use, nor can we rationally use, the word *good*, but to signify that a thing is proper for a certain end which we have, at least tacitly, in our minds.

277.
The general end
is to be content.

Now the end we always have tacitly in our minds, is to be content and satisfied, either in procuring a good, or avoiding an evil, which is at bottom a real good, as the first degree of happiness is to be exempt from evil,

It frequently happens therefore, that the satisfaction we have tacitly in view does not appear in the near end, which is actually in the mind: but this near end, in the main, is no otherwise considered but as leading to satisfaction and some degree of happiness. A painter goes to a colour-man: For what purpose? To buy colours. Why colours? To grind and blend them together with oil. And wherefore does he blend them?

To

To spread them on canvass with his pencils and brushes, in order to form a picture for sale, that he may acquire money and reputation. At every step we perceive an end; and each end leads to another, until the last mentioned. And to what purpose money and reputation? Because they procure us pleasure, content, and satisfaction, as far as we are capable of enjoying them in our present state.

In every end therefore, leading to another, we still find *good*; and the good will never be found but with respect to satisfaction, which is the general end. If we therefore supposed that a particular being could no way contribute to the satisfaction of any one, he would, on that very account, forfeit all pretensions to character, and every degree of goodness.

It is thus we must understand philosophers when they say, *whatever is, is right*; that is, it contributes to happiness, either directly or indirectly: we do not always see in what manner; but the Creator sees it. Again, besides the satisfaction that may thence result to mankind, the glory of God is always manifested therein, which is the only good of which we can presume to judge the Supreme Being susceptible.

It will be asked perhaps, what difference there is between what is commonly called right or honest, and what is called good or *useful*; as both

278.
Whatever exists
is good.

279.
What is virtuous, useful, and
pleasing.

PART II.

both must give us satisfaction. The difference is, that what is *honest* or virtuous satisfies us with regard to conscience and reason, and is a lasting and solid good, not subject to painful disappointments; whereas the good commonly styled *useful*, when it is contrary to honesty and virtue, satisfies cupidity, and is exposed to disgust and anxiety. If the satisfaction derived from what is useful be strong, but of very short duration, we then commonly give it the epithet of *pleasing*; nevertheless, strictly speaking, every good is truly *useful*, as it contributes to our satisfaction more or less, one way or another, either for a time, or for eternity.

280.
Every individual
thinks of him-
self in what he
calls a good.

It is therefore proper to observe here, that the word *good* is very equivocal, as it equally signifies different kinds of goodness, which are not distinguished. As every man in particular thinks of himself preferably to all others, he calls good or goodness only what contributes to his own particular happiness; but, as happiness belongs to all men who are united by social bands, we should not, I think, call any thing *good* or *goodness* *positively*, unless it contributes to the general happiness of all men, or does good, and appears good to all. When the words are not taken in that sense, we should never dispute about them; for if, of the same object, one says it is *good*, and another that it is *not* good, they

are

are both right: it is no more than if one should say, *this object is good for me, or pleasing to me*; and the other, that *it is not good for him, or is displeasing to him*; which is equally true with respect to the two persons who say so.

CHAP. XV.

The word true or real sometimes takes the signification of the word *good*, as when we say real or good gold, a true or real pearl, &c. This is nothing but a mode of expression to signify that the properties to which we have affixed the name of *pearl*, as whiteness and clearness, are suitable to a thing we are actually indicating: this, at bottom, signifies nothing but that such an object described is *truly*, that is, actually, a pearl; so that custom only adopted the word true to distinguish things to which we give a certain denomination, in consequence of such various properties as are supposed in it—to distinguish them, I say, from those which might have only the appearance, or a part of those properties, without having them really or entirely. Thus we say a real or true diamond, speaking of that which has all the properties we commonly unite with the idea indicated by the word *diamond*, such as its brilliancy and hardness: and, on the other hand, we call false or counterfeit what may have the brightness and appearance of the diamond, but not the hardness or some other qualities which we suppose essential to a diamond. But this subject does not merit further discussion.

28r.
The word true, or real, is sometimes taken for the word good.

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CHAPTER XVI.

Of order.

282.
It is not usual to
investigate the
idea of order.

I AM surpris'd not to find the subject of this article commonly treated like many others in metaphysical works: I know not whether there is one that has a juster claim to notice in the investigation of first truths, and of the principles of human knowledge: there is, in fact, no idea that can be less discerned by anterior knowledge, nor whence a greater variety of knowledge may be deduced, either for speculative science, or the conduct of life.

283.
Order defined.

I have seen order defined by some, as *an arrangement of things*, or *a just distribution of parts*: but it happens on this occasion, as on many others, that the definition itself wants explanation as much as the thing defined; for I ask, in what *this arrangement of things consists*? What must be done, that the distribution of parts may be a *just distribution*? Arrangement, moreover, is nothing but the action or situation by which order is placed or introduced any where: it is therefore necessary to know what *order* is, in order to understand fully what *arrangement* is. Again, the
just

just distribution or disposition of things is nothing but their arrangement: we should therefore be acquainted with the arrangement of things, in order to know their just disposition. I think I shall convey a more just idea of order by saying, that it is *the disposition made in the different parts of a whole, that is proper for attaining the end an intelligent being has in view.*

It is obvious then, that order supposes an intelligent capacity; for, by taking away the idea of intelligence, you take away the idea of *design* or *end*: and, in fact, with respect to things merely material, which we should suppose to have no relation to any intelligence, turn them upside down, inside or outside, when no end is proposed in those different situations, one arrangement is as well as the other, and all are equally in their places, all being equally without destination; as material things are by their nature incapable of having any from themselves.

But when I see a great number of beings, or different parties, who I know might have existed independent of each other, and who are actually disposed together in a manner calculated to attain a useful or pleasing end, that an intelligent capacity either had, or might have had in view, I there plainly discover order, and I know no rational person but what must discover

it

284.
Order supposes
an intelligent
being.

285.
Various things
adapted to the
same end denote
order.

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it as well as I. Such then is precisely the nature of order.

286.
Example in an
oration or pic-
ture.

In like manner, when I design to persuade a body of men, or to make any impression on them by an oration or speech of an hour long; if all the parts, the sentences, or words of the oration be ranged in the most proper manner for persuading; or making the impression intended on those who shall hear or read the oration, there is *order*, in it; as it consists of parts disposed for the accomplishment of an end or purpose.

In the remembrance of an action performed by a great number of persons, and accompanied by a multiplicity of events, if a painter, who resolves to represent it in a picture, in order to give me a distinct idea of the matter, arranges all the parts of the piece in such a manner as that I may, upon simply viewing it, conceive a distinct idea of the action and circumstances, it is then evident likewise, that there is order in the piece; or, to speak in the style of a painter, there is *arrangement*.

Again, if an architect proposes to raise an edifice, in which are to be found all the parts and arrangements necessary or useful for the residence of a prince and his attendants, there must be order in such an edifice.

287.
A printed book
cannot be the
effect of chance.

When I see a printed poem, such as the Eneid of Virgil, which results from the just situation of
above

above four or five hundred thousand letters, ranged in such a manner as to present to my mind the end which an intelligent being had in view; that is, to describe the successive adventures of a hero, in a sensible, ingenious, and pleasing narrative, it is impossible for me not to conceive, by this order, that it must have been formed by a mind or intelligence; and whoever will tell me that the Eneid might have been formed or disposed by *chance*, will say, in fact, that it was formed by something unintelligible; and then he must speak at random, without having any idea annexed to his words.

Thus order, in a permanent subject, always denotes an intelligence and end; but it shews it in a manner incomparably more striking in a successive subject, such as a watch or clock, which, for a series of years, continues to mark regularly the division of months and hours. To judge seriously that a clock might be formed by the defect of causes or ideas expressed in the word *chance*, is a thing as manifestly absurd as it would be to judge that we do not think when we are actually thinking: and this is one of those first ideas, or first truths, that can have none prior; for, if a man should ask to have it proved that some intelligence, and not chance alone, has formed and preserves the regularity of a clock, all the proof that should be given to him would be to remain silent,

288.
Order in successive subjects is still more conspicuous.

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289.
The idea of order is important,

silent; for what could be said on such an occasion but that the man was out of his senses?

This first truth, though simple and easy, is however useful and proper for solving many difficulties in the most important subjects; and I know not whether I could not, with the help of it alone, immediately silence a man that should attempt to defend the system of Spinoza, provided he rightly understood what he might advance.

CHAPTER XVII.

Of act and action.

290.
The explanations of action are obscure.

WHAT is *action*? It is, we are told, *the exercise of a power or faculty*. And what is *power* or *faculty*? It is, according to some, *the power of acting*. But how are we to understand what the *power of acting* is, when we are still ignorant of what *acting* or *action* is? So that nothing is here said, unless one word for another; one obscure, and the state of the question, for another that is obscure; and equally the state of the question.

It is the same with respect to all the other terms that are usually employed on this subject.

If

If it be said, that *to act* is to produce an effect, and to be the efficient cause of it, properly speaking; I ask first, what is *to produce*; secondly, what *effect* is; thirdly, what is *cause*; fourthly, what *efficient cause*, properly speaking, is: for all these do not give me a more distinct and simple idea than *action*, and *to act*.

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It is true that, in material things and certain circumstances, I can form a tolerably just idea of what it is to *produce* a thing, and be the *efficient* cause of it, by observing that it is *to communicate a part of their own substance to beings that are thought new*. Thus the earth produces grass, which is nothing but the substance of the earth, with an increase or change of modification as to figure, colour, flexibility, &c. In like manner the sun produces light, which, in the air or our bodies, is nothing more than a communication of some particles or rays of the sun, modified by their distance, rarefaction, &c.

291.
What it is to
produce in ma-
terial things.

In this sense, I clearly comprehend what it is to *produce*, and be the efficient cause: and I shall as readily understand what effect is, if it be said that it is a being whose substance has been drawn from that of another being, with new modifications or circumstances; for, if no new modifications had taken place, no difference would remain between the substance communicated and the substance communicating.

292.
What are effici-
ent causes in the
same things.

P

But,

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But, after having thus formed the most exact idea that can be desired of what it is to produce an effect, and be the efficient cause of it on certain occasions, still we do not know what it is *to act* and to *produce* in general; for, as soon as a substance communicates a part of what it is to another substance, we perceive, and say, that it *acts*: but this does not prevent us from saying that a being acts on many other occasions, though we do not perceive that a substance communicates any part of what it is.

293.
A stone is said to act without communicating any part of its substance.

Let a stone break from a rock, and in its fall strike against another stone, which, being set in motion, begins to descend; we then say that the first stone acts upon the second: but has it therefore communicated any part of its substance to the stone acted upon? On the contrary, it has perhaps lost some in the collision. It may be said, perhaps, that it is the motion of the first that has been communicated to the second; and it is by that communication of motion the first stone is said *to act*. But these are still words which people fancy they understand, but which are not, in fact, sufficiently understood: for, in fine, how is the motion of the first stone communicated to the second, if no part of the substance of the stone be communicated? Is motion any thing else but a mere mode? and is a mode, in the opinion of all philosophers really, physically, out of

of our thoughts, any other thing besides the substance itself of which it is a mode?

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Every mode is naturally as incommunicable, without a communication of the substance, as the substance itself is incommunicable. To say therefore that the motion of a substance may be communicated, without the substance itself being communicated, would be to say nearly, that the roundness of a globe may be communicated to another substance, without any part of the substance of the globe being communicated. We see plainly that, upon receiving the shock from the first stone, the second begins to acquire a motion it had not before, and the first to lose a part of the motion it had: but, unless we take a pleasure in perplexing ourselves, we cannot thence conclude that the motion of the one passes into the substance of the other: as the mode is really nothing but the first substance, it would be saying that this substance becomes another substance without ceasing to be what it is. It is therefore true, that one body acts upon another, without communicating any part of its substance to it. The action of the stone that sets another in motion, is not then a communication of a part of its being, or essence, to another being.

Again, when what I call in myself my mind, or my soul, from having no thought or desire with regard to any particular object;

P 2

con-

294.
A mode is not communicated.

295.
The soul acts internally without communicating any part of its essence.

PART II.

conceives a thought or desire relative to that object; it is then generally said *to act*. The thought or desire, however, that has occurred, being no more than a mode of my mind and soul, is not an essence or substance distinct from them; and in this respect, likewise, to act, is not to communicate a part of what one substance is to another substance.

196.
It acts in the
same manner ex-
ternally.

We also make use of the term *to act*, when in consequence of a thought or desire, conceived internally in the mind, a motion is formed externally, and in the body: but, as I see, however, no part of the substance of my mind that can be imagined to have passed to my body, I cannot rationally say that any part of the substance of my mind is communicated to that of my body, on those occasions wherein my mind is said *to act* upon my body; as my mind and body can have nothing substantial in common, according to the most precise idea that can be formed of both.

297.
God acts with-
out communi-
cating any part
of his substance.

In like manner, if we consider that God, as the only being from all eternity, by his omnipotent will made other beings that are called *creatures*, or *the world*, we say thence also that God *acted*: but, in this action, no part of the substance of God becomes a part of the substance of his creatures. We see by these different examples, that the words *to act* form ideas entirely different; a matter well worthy of observation.

In

In the first example, *to act* signifies only what passes when a body in motion meets with a second body which is then set in motion, or acquires a greater degree of motion; while the first loses entirely, or lessens its motion.

CHAP. XVII.

298.
Various senses
of the words *to*
act.

In the second example, *to act* denotes what passes in me and in each man, when the soul takes one of the two modifications of which I know by experience that it is susceptible, and which are called *thought* or *will*.

In the third example, *to act* means what happens when, in consequence of a thought or desire formed in me, a corporeal motion is produced in my body.

In the fourth example, *to act* signifies what happens when, in consequence of the will of God, something is formed distinct from him.

I say then, that, in these four examples, the words *to act* express four things and four ideas so different, that they have no relation to each other, but what is very vague and indeterminate: it is, that, in consequence of the being we say *acts*, some change happens; and this very change is what we call *action*: but it is in all these different sorts of changes, or actions, that I say there is no affinity or relation; for in the first, that is, in the *stone*, by which another is likewise moved, the change is made inwardly, and outwardly in a corporeal being that is said to act. In the se-

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cond example, or in the soul that begins to conceive a thought or desire, the change is produced entirely within a spiritual being. In the third example of the soul moving the body, the change is effected both within a spiritual being, and of consequence externally in a corporeal being. In the fourth example, with respect to God, who acts externally, the change is entirely distinct from, and out of, him who acts, and by no means within.

Philosophers certainly, and in particular metaphysical writers, have been very remiss in this point. We hear them speak and dispute of nothing but *acting* and *action*; but in no one of them, not excepting Mr. Locke himself, who endeavoured to penetrate into the inmost recesses of the human mind, can we discover that they have any where thought of explaining the nature of *action*.

CHAPTER XVIII.

The question as to accidental causes explained, in order to know whether creatures act, or God alone.

IT has been long disputed whether creatures act or not; whether they be merely *accidental causes*, or *real agents*. Numberless volumes have been written on this subject, and men of the greatest abilities have taken an active and warm part in the debate. People were for a long while attentive to those wrangles, and grew weary of them at last, because they could not comprehend them: but, did the disputants themselves ever clearly understand each other? And, in order to accomplish that necessary purpose, ought they not to have observed to one another, *We are disputing whether creatures act, or God alone acts upon them; but have we ever agreed with respect to what ACTION, and TO ACT, in themselves are? Is this point fully settled between us? By the same word we all use, do we precisely mean the same thing? If I am not much deceived, they would have found that they were not agreed in those particulars.*

For, in short, the words *to act* and *action* being manifestly equivocal, and forming ideas entirely

299.
Men dispute
whether crea-
tures act, with-
out knowing
what it is TO
ACT.

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different with respect to God and his creatures, we should be told the precise and general idea affixed to those words, to enable us to examine whether they may be applied both to the creature and God, and that we may know whether creatures act or not, whilst we all agree that God acts.

300.
Different ideas
of the word, ac-
cording to the
various occasions
adduced.

With respect to inanimate creatures, the idea we have of *action*, being nothing but the idea of what passes when one body is put in motion by the meeting of another, it is evidently absurd to ask whether the idea of *action* be applicable to God and the creature; for, in short, God is not a body in motion, by the meeting of which another is moved.

301.
What TO ACT
is, in God,

In God the idea of action is the idea of what happens, when by his will alone something is made or done distinct from him; and, if we take the idea of action in this sense, there can be no reason in asking whether an inanimate creature acts, as it is incapable of willing or desiring. Add to this, that, as what we call *acting* or *action* in inanimate creatures is nothing, in fact, but motion, they have not, in themselves, the principle or power of action, as they have not the principle of motion; for, being in themselves indifferent as to motion or rest, they have no principle to incline them more to motion than to rest. And indeed no body

is

is ever put in motion of itself, but by another body; and the latter again by another, and so on until we come to a spiritual mover.

CHAP. XVIII.

As what is called *action*, or *to act*, in bodies, includes no idea of *will*, we see no relation between the idea of *action* with respect to God, and the idea of *action* in regard to bodies; so that we cannot, in that sense, ask whether action be a property equally applicable to God, and to bodies.

302.
To act, in bodies, includes no idea of will.

Let us see if it be more rational to ask, whether *to act*, or *action*, according to its precise idea, be a thing equally applicable to God, and to spiritual creatures, such as the souls of men. In order to discuss this matter with precision, let us consider the soul of man, as far as it may be said *to act*, either internally by thought or will, or externally by the motion produced in certain bodies by the will or thought.

303.
How action may be applicable to God, and to our souls, according to the ideas already explained.

In the first respect, as what passes within me, when a thought or operation of the will takes place, is called *to act*, it is manifest, in this sense, that my soul *acts*, and that God does not act: for a thought or operation of the will is produced in my soul, which is to my soul a new modification in its nature or essence; whereas, God being perfectly the same from all eternity, he is incapable of any new modification.

304.
No change takes place in God when he acts.

True,

PART II.

305.
Whether, in the
action of the
soul, the soul
itself, or God,
be the principle
of action.

True, it will be perhaps said, our souls neither think, nor exercise their will, but by the thoughts and suggestions of the will that take place in them, and which are their modifications: but it may be asked, whether it be God or the soul that is the principle of those modifications, and produces them? In order to answer this question, we should remember that we have not yet naturally any idea of the words *to act*, with respect to God, unless it be the idea of what passes when, in conformity to his will, something that did not exist before is produced distinct from him. In this sense, those who pretend that God alone acts in each thought which takes place in our souls, of course pretend likewise that every one of the thoughts and operations of the will takes place and exists in our souls, solely because God will have it so, and by a positive determination of his will.

306.
In what manner
the soul acts on-
ly because God
will have it so.

But this idea itself, *because God will have it so*, admits of another equivocation. These words, in fact, may signify two very different things: the one is, that God, in general, will have the soul of man, from the nature he has bestowed upon it, and in consequence of what he has made it, to be such, as to contribute of itself to its thought, and the operations of its will, which are its peculiar modifications.

Or

Or these terms, *because God will have it so*, mean, that every thought or operation of the will, which arises in our souls, is produced in them solely by the particular and determinate will of God; so that our souls, at this rate, have as little share in forming their own thoughts and desires, as stones or blocks have in giving motion to themselves.

I have spoken of *will* as of *thought*, as both are alike modifications of the soul. If the soul, in fact, can contribute nothing to the modification of its thought, how should it contribute more to the modification of its will? Or, if it can contribute to the latter, why should it not to the former likewise? To say therefore, that the soul has no more share in forming its modification, which is *will* or *thought*, than matter has with respect to its modification or motion, is saying, that the soul has no more virtue or power than a lump of earth, or a log of wood.

But, without taking notice of the horrid and destructive tendency of such an opinion, as to religion and morality, I say, that, even in mere natural speculation, it is manifestly irrational; for, when a body is put in motion, we see, and frequently before our eyes, that the principle of this motion is foreign to the body; and, with respect to the soul, we cannot discern any external principle of its thought and will; we indeed

307.
The soul equally contributes to its thoughts, and the operations of its will.

308.
We see no external principle of the action of the soul.

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309.
The principle
of action is in
the soul.

deed see the occasion in objects that strike our senses; but it never can be supposed that a corporeal object is the principle of thought, and produces it.

This principle is then in the soul itself, as mankind have always believed; or in God only, as some new-fangled philosophers have fancied: but this matter, if we consider it properly, is one of those first truths that can neither be proved nor combated by any truth anterior and more perspicuous. To oppose it, in fact, by saying, that *a simple creature, such as the soul, is incapable of modifying itself*, in order thence to conclude, *that it is not the soul that produces its own thought in itself*, would be merely to adduce the state of the question as a proof; for the point is, to prove *that a spiritual creature, such as the soul, cannot, and ought not, to modify itself*; as the natural sense of mankind, in all ages, supports the affirmative. If it be added, that motion is as essentially the modification of the body, as thought is the modification of the mind; and it be thence concluded, that, as the body cannot produce the modification peculiar to it, neither can the mind have a greater share in forming its own; this again will be saying nothing to the purpose: for the question is merely to know, whether it be not the essence or nature of a mind to modify

diffy itself, in contradistinction to bodies, which are naturally incapable of any such thing.

CHAP. XVIII.

In this question, however, with respect to which mankind in general are of one opinion, what can a few speculative philosophers mean, when they pretend to assert the contrary, and attempt to subvert a sentiment so universally established, without adducing any other proof but the state itself of the question in more confused terms?

310.
Those who attack this truth adduce the state of the question as a proof.

This being the state of the controversy, the question, as I have already said, then falls on a first truth; and a first truth cannot be opposed but by frivolous arguments, as it cannot be combated by a proposition anterior, or more clear; otherwise it would no longer remain a first truth.

311.
The notion of acting, a first truth.

Should any one pretend to attack it by another truth equally clear, and adduced likewise as a first truth; in that case, as of those pretended contradictory first truths, one must necessarily be not a first truth, but a falsehood, I ask how the controversy is to be properly decided, unless by the opinion most generally established, and most natural to mankind? If then I advance as a first truth, that *my soul produces motion in my body*; and Malbranche, on the other hand, proposes as a first truth, *that a mind cannot act upon a body*; in this situation we prove nothing to each other: but I have on my side the

PART II.

the sentiments suggested by Nature to the generality of mankind in all ages; and on his side he has a particular reflection; that is, *he does not see any relation between a mind and a body*, or that, *in the idea of his soul, he does not find the faculty or virtue of moving a body*: but, if he means to ground a proof on his reflection, nothing can be more erroneous than such a mode of proceeding; for the only inference that can thence be drawn, is, that a thing is not, because he does not see it, and can have no idea of it. This is no less absurd than the conclusion of a man, born blind, who should attempt to deny the existence of colours, because he does not see them, and cannot, by the utmost exertion of the mind, form any idea of the matter.

312.
We should know
the secret nature
of the soul be-
fore we attempt-
ed to assert that
it does not act.

To deny therefore, upon any good foundation, that the soul is capable of moving a body, we should be fully convinced that we have a clear and perfect idea of the whole nature of the soul; and that we know its secret and real essence as well as it can possibly be known: but this is not the case, as all the world knows. If then, in general, it be a very erroneous mode of argument to conclude, that, as I do not see or cannot know a thing, therefore it does not exist; and I cannot see how my soul should move my body, therefore it does not move it; the absurdity of such

such a consequence is infinitely more ridiculous and extravagant, when the thing I cannot see is nevertheless confirmed by a sentiment natural to all men, that irresistibly inclines them to esteem many things true, of which they can neither know the nature, nor the essence. We cannot discover either the manner or the nature of the union of the soul with the body. Shall we thence conclude, according to the method of arguing of Malbranche, that no such union really exists? To what shocking absurdities must such arguments lead! How much more rational is it to conform to the experience of mankind, and admit the reality and existence of many objects above our comprehension! A sentiment universally diffused by Nature among mankind is a sure guide: let us not abandon it therefore in order to embrace illusions.

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CHAPTER XIX.

*Precise ideas calculated to explain what TO ACT,
ACTION, CAUSE AND EFFECT, are.*

^{313.}
The idea of act-
ing.

AS the result of the preceding discussions on the nature of action—discussions perhaps the most important that are to be found in philosophy, and the first principles of human knowledge—let us form a compendious abstract of what may be rationally replied to the question, What then is *acting*, or *to act*? I say, with respect to creatures, *to act* is, in general, *the disposition of a being, from which by his intervention some change actually happens*: for it is impossible to conceive that there naturally happens any change, unless by some being that acts; and no created being acts, but a change must ensue, either in itself, or in some external object.

^{314.}
Bodies act as
instruments.

It will perhaps be said, it must then follow, that the pen with which I am now writing should be considered as acting, since, by means of the pen, a change is effected on the paper, which from being blank paper becomes a written paper: to this I reply, if such a consequence must follow, it will produce no inconvenience. This must be
allowed

allowed by the whole body of philosophers, as they give to my pen, on this occasion, the name of *instrumental cause*; for, if it be a *cause*, it has an effect, and every thing that has an effect of course *acts*; as, to act, and to have an effect, is precisely the same thing.

I say further, my pen, on this occasion, acts as truly and formally as any cause whatever, among beings purely corporeal, that do not communicate any part of their substance to their production. Indeed, if there be in the world any efficacious cause of this kind, it is a subterraneous fire that produces an earthquake; yet an earthquake is nothing but the motion of the particles of the earth excited by the motion of the particles of fire: in like manner also, the lines actually formed on this paper are only the ink moved in a particular manner by my pen, which is itself moved by my hand. There is no difference therefore between the ink moved on this paper and the earthquake, but that in the latter the immediate cause of the motion of the earth is more imperceptible or subtle, and in the former less so; but, at bottom, the fire does not more truly act on the particles of the earth than my pen on this paper. If it be said, that my pen is itself moved by my hand, I say that the particles of fire are themselves also moved or agitated by the air, and the air by some other body

^{315.}
Unless they
communicate
a part of their
substance.

Q

that

PART II.

that is not the less real for being imperceptible to our senses; as nothing is effected, with regard to things merely corporeal, but mechanically.

316.
They are
thought to act
when we cannot
discern what
moves them.

I acknowledge, that when the immediate cause of a corporeal motion eludes our senses, we say more particularly that the body *acts* in which the motion happens; and we are apt to imagine that bodies, in which a motion is effected without any perceptible cause, have the principle of their motion in themselves: but, if we suppose them mere bodies—for I mean not to allude to the souls of animals, to the nature of which we are perfect strangers—I say, if we suppose them such, it is obvious to human reason, and all sound philosophy, that a body is never put in motion but by an external agent. According to this, the definition we have given of *acting* will agree very well with all that is said to *act* with respect to bodies.

317.
The idea of act-
ing is applicable
to the soul.

It will agree still better with what is said to *act* with regard to minds, either within themselves by their thought and will, or extraneously by the motion they impress on any body; for each of these things is a change that happens through the interference of the soul.

The definition may be equally applied to the action of God, and to God himself, according to what we conceive of him: we conceive that he acts when he produces or creates any thing;
for

for then there is a change effected by a being who exists of himself. But, before God produced any thing different from himself, did he not act, and could he have been from all eternity to that time without action? This question is incomprehensible, as, before we can give an answer to it, we must penetrate into the very essence of God, which is itself impenetrable. The learned will in vain tell us, with regard to this matter, that God from all eternity *acts by a simple, immanent, and permanent act*: these words are indeed lofty, and even respectable; but they convey no clear idea to our minds.

For my own part, who, as St. Paul expressly says, know not the Creator naturally but by his creatures, I can have no idea of him naturally, but as they suggest it; and they suggest none as to what God in himself is, without any reference to them. I see very well that an intelligent being, such as the Author of the Creation, must have thought from all eternity; and if we call *acting*, with respect to God, what is simply to *think* or *will*, without any new thought, modification, or change taking place in him, I have no objection: and, if religion be more satisfied with the term *acting*, I shall still be more inviolably attached to it: but the question, at bottom, can never be any thing more than nominal; for, with respect to creatures, I comprehend what it is to act; and

PART II.

it is the same we apply to God to express of him what we do not comprehend.

Will it however be granted, that, with respect to creatures, I understand what it is *to act*? And shall I not be told, that I only comprehend what passes on those occasions that are called *acting*, but not the intrinsic nature and virtue of acting?

318.
We do not comprehend what the principle of action is.

If it be meant thereby, that I do not comprehend what is the principle of acting in creatures, I readily acquiesce. I know there is in my soul a principle that puts my body in motion; and that I do not comprehend the source or spring of this principle; but, at the same time, I do not presume to explain it. All true philosophy would be reduced to a very narrow compass, if all philosophers were, like me, to avoid speaking of things that are evidently incomprehensible. When they shall have fully investigated and explained all matters that are within the reach of human capacity, they may then employ their thoughts on ingenious and even useless speculations. We shall now, by way of concluding this chapter, explain some terms familiar to the subject we have been treating.

319.
A recapitulation of ideas on this matter.

1st. *To act* then, as I have observed, is, in general, with respect to creatures, what passes in a being, by means of which any change happens.

2^{dly}.

2dly. What happens by the change is called *effect*; so that *to act*, or *produce an effect*, is the same thing.

3dly. The being from whom the change may be said to proceed, I call *cause*.

4thly. The change, considered at the moment it actually happens, is, with respect to the cause, termed *action*.

5thly. The *action*, as impressed on, or received by, any being, is called *passion*; and, as received in an intelligent being who produced it himself, is termed *act*: so that, with regard to spiritual beings, we generally say, that *act* is the name of the acting faculty, and *action* the exercise of this faculty.

6thly. The cause, considered at the same time, with respect to the action and act, I call *causality*: the cause, considered as being capable of this causality, I term *power* or *faculty*. These are the clearest ideas I have been able to form of those terms which are used by philosophers to express a certain precision that is sometimes necessary to be observed. If others will explain them more accurately, I shall readily adopt their language.

CHAPTER XX.

WHAT IS NATURAL, *considered in opposition to* SUPERNATURAL *and* ARTIFICIAL.

320.
Natural, taken
in various senses.

BESIDES the ideas the word *natural* disposition may have in common with the word *nature*, and which we have explained elsewhere, (N°. 217.) it is taken likewise for the inclination that results in each particular man from constitution or temper. To analyse any of these ideas, is not the object of our present views; we have only to consider the *natural disposition* or *nature* of created beings under two points of view. 1st. In as much as they exist and act conformably to the ordinary laws God has established for them, and by which they have only a limited and determinate degree of virtue, faculty, or power: in that sense, what we call *natural* is contrary to *supernatural* or *miraculous*. 2dly. As far as they exist or act within the boundaries of those laws, and of their determinate virtue, but without the interference of any effort of human industry, or attention of our mind to employ or dispose things, with respect to any particular end or design: and, in this sense, what we term *na-*

tural

tural is contrary to what we call *artificial*, which is nothing but human industry.

CHAP. XX.

It appears difficult sometimes to distinguish how far what is natural is opposed to supernatural; for, in short, in the latter sense, what is natural supposes general and ordinary laws: but what are those general and ordinary laws? Are we capable of ascertaining them exactly? We perceive and sufficiently distinguish an effect that is not supernatural or miraculous; but we do not so justly discern what is so. What we see regularly, or at least frequently happen, is common, and consequently natural: but is every extraordinary thing that happens in the world miraculous? This we cannot pretend to affirm. And indeed a very uncommon event, that should only happen once in a hundred thousand years, might nevertheless proceed from a common principle, which, in a series of revolutions and changes, might have formed a kind of prodigy, without quitting the regular course and limits of its sphere. Thus we sometimes see monsters of the most unaccountable and strange nature; and yet we look upon them neither as miraculous, nor supernatural. It may be therefore asked, how we can assert that events, considered as supernatural and miraculous, are so in reality, and not merely the effect of one of those revolutions that happen in the course of a long series of events; or, in

321.
It appears difficult to mark the bounds of natural and supernatural.

PART II.

322.
There are circumstances by which we distinguish one from the other.

what manner we are to know how far extends the virtue or efficacy of this common principle, which, by a long succession of time, and particular combinations, may produce the most extraordinary things.

I again confess, that it is not always so easy a task as people imagine, to distinguish natural from supernatural things: our ignorance may sometimes deceive us in these matters; so that, with respect to many events, which appear miracles to the common people, a wise man should prudently suspend his judgement. But we must likewise allow, that there are events of such a nature, which no rational mind can believe to be the effects of that common principle of things we style the order of Nature: such is, for example, the restoring a man from death to life.

It is in vain to object, that we are ignorant how far the powers of Nature extend; and that she has, perhaps, resources to work the most wonderful effects, from secret causes unknown to us. This may be advanced by men of extravagant fancies: the love of contradiction, or any other motive, may suggest these thoughts to some; but these things can make no impression upon men of sense, who reflect seriously on the matter, and are resolved to deceive neither themselves nor others. This impression of common truth, that is evidently found in the breasts of the

the far greater part of mankind, and which we have elsewhere denominated *a common sentiment*, or *common sense*, is the unerring rule for distinguishing supernatural from natural; and this knowledge should be ranked among the number of first truths that require no proof: nay, it is the rule itself which the Author of Nature has imprinted on the minds of all men; and he would have contradicted himself, if he had formed them to judge true what is false, and miraculous what is natural.

Natural is opposed to artificial, as well as to miraculous; but not in the same respect, and after the same manner. What is supernatural and miraculous can never be said to be natural; but what is artificial may be termed natural, and is really so when it is not considered as miraculous.

Artificial is then nothing but what proceeds from the ordinary principle of things, but to which accedes the care and industry of the human mind, for the accomplishment of some particular purpose designed by man.

The practice of raising by pipes and pumps immense bodies of water is a thing natural, as there is nothing supernatural in it: it is however called *artificial*, and not *natural*; because it has been introduced into the world only by the care

^{323.}
Artificial things
are natural, and
not natural.

^{324.}
Definition of
artificial.

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care and industry of men, in order to effect a purpose that Nature had denied before the exercise and application of the human mind.

^{325.}
Most things in
use are in some
degree artificial.

In this sense there is scarcely any thing in use that is totally natural, but what has not been at the disposal of man. A tree, for example a plum-tree or cherry-tree, is natural while it grows spontaneously in the forest, without planting or grafting: but when it has either been planted or grafted, in that respect it loses as much of its natural quality as it has received impressions by the care of men. Do not plums and cherries then grow naturally on a grafted tree? Yes, so far, that they do not grow supernaturally; but not so when considered as being produced by the assistance of human industry; for in this respect the plums and cherries grow artificially. But if, after a tree has been once ingrafted, no farther care be taken of it, are not the plums and cherries then produced naturally? Yes, with regard to their growing and ripening, as human industry has no share in contributing to either; but with respect to those peculiar qualities of the plums and cherries, and their having such a flavour and sweetness, as they could not have possessed without the help of human industry, the plums and cherries are produced artificially, and not naturally.

It

It is asked in what sense, we may, speaking of a particular wine, say that it is *natural*, as all wine is in itself artificial; for, without the industry and care of men, there is no wine: so that, in this respect, wine is as truly artificial as brandy or spirits of wine; and they differ only in the greater or less degree of human industry, that is, in being more or less *artificial*. When wine is called *natural*, we give it that term to denote that it is in the state of ordinary wine, without any other preparation than is usual with respect to all wines in those seasons and countries when and where they are produced.

According to the foregoing ideas, it is easy to perceive in what sense the quality of *natural* or *unnatural* is applicable to various sorts of minds. A mind is considered and said to be *natural*, when the disposition it has, neither proceeds from the care of other men, by instruction and education, nor is acquired by its own particular reflections.

To the word *natural*, taken in the latter sense, are opposed the terms *cultivated* or *affected*: the former is a merit, the latter a reproach: the one expresses what is added to the natural mind by industry and judicious application or art; the other, what it sometimes acquires by vanity and wrong habits.

The same may be observed, in proportion, of the talents of the mind. A man is said to have *natural*

CHAP. XX.

326.
As all wine is artificial, how can any be said to be natural?

327.
The natural mind, or disposition.

328.
AFFECTED OR CULTIVATED, opposed to NATURAL.

PART II.

tural eloquence or logic, when, without the knowledge that is acquired by the industry and reflections of other men or his own, he argues rationally, which is the ultimate and principal design of artificial Logic; or if he conveys to the minds of others a strong and lively impression of his ideas and sentiments whenever he likes, which is the end of artificial eloquence, commonly called Rhetoric. What has been now said of the first ideas of natural, supernatural, and artificial, may be so readily applied to all kinds of subjects, that it is not necessary to dwell longer on the matter, in order to deduce the first truths on a subject which, on the one hand, is very common, and in which however men are frequently apt to be mistaken.

CHAPTER XXI.

Of substance and accident.

329.
Ideas that are naturally formed from substance and accidents.

I SHALL now examine what ideas may be naturally formed with respect to the terms *substance* and *accident*. After weighing the matter in my mind, I have not been able to conceive any thing by *substance* but what corresponds with the idea of *being*, which I divest of the idea of every

every modification or mode of being, in order to consider it only as far as it may be susceptible of those modifications or modes of being. Substance, therefore, considered precisely as *substance*, is nothing but an abstracted idea; for there exists naturally and really no *substance* that is but *substance* without being united with its modifications, which, according to the ideas we can naturally form, are nothing but the substance considered in various respects. They are sometimes called *qualities*; at other times, *modes* or *modifications*; on other occasions, *attributes* or *adjuncts*, *circumstances*, or *accidents*, of the object: and on these are grounded different questions.

It is asked first, Whether a substance and its modification can mutually exist distinct from each other? All that is necessary here, I think, is to explain the terms; and then no difficulty will remain.

If the modification does not immediately form a part of the nature of the thing or substance; and be no way essential to it, the substance may remain without its modification. Thus a bowl actually modified by motion, may exist, and often does exist, without motion; because the bowl is essentially a *bowl*, and considered as such, independently of motion; and this may be called *accident*, or *accidental modification*.

If,

330.
Whether the
substance can
subsist without
its modifica-
tion.

PART II.

331.
It cannot, if the
modification
forms part of its
essence.

If, on the contrary, the modification I have in my mind forms a part of what is, and of what I suppose, essential to the object, the object cannot exist separate from its modification: thus fire cannot be without the modification of motion; because, according to the idea we have of things in their natural state, fire essentially consists only of particles of matter in motion; and this modification may be called essential. But cannot fire exist miraculously, at least without motion? I confess my ignorance in this matter. But, supposing such a thing possible, it is no longer the fire I am thinking or speaking of; for I am speaking of a natural fire, and whoever asks the question, speaks of a supernatural fire, to which I mean not to allude, as I have naturally no idea of such a thing.

We must also remember that we often suppose essences to be things (No. 202.) different from what they really are; as we neither know them intimately, nor in all respects what they are exactly in themselves; but only by that which strikes our senses. Our readers are referred to what has been already observed with regard to essence. (No. 197, &c.)

In order then to determine whether a thing may or may not be without its modification, let us first be agreed as to the idea we have of the essence of the thing; and if the modification in question

question forms no part of that essence, the thing may be without its modification. CHAP. XXI.

Thus, in order to know whether it be a simple modification in fishes to have blood without heat, we must previously settle what constitutes the essence of fishes. It had been long made to consist in their having blood without heat; it has been since alledged that the blood of some fishes is warm. The Academy of Sciences at Paris has determined, that it is the peculiar nature of fishes to have a blood or substance that forms an oil instead of grease: in the latter case, it will be no more than accidental in the substance of fishes to have blood without heat.

332.
What is essential
or accidental in
fishes.

If the modified substance, however, can exist without its modification, the modification cannot naturally exist independent of the substance: I say naturally, and according to the ideas solely suggested by mere human reason, within the bounds of which we confine ourselves in this treatise; for, in short, according to our mere natural ideas, the modification of the substance is nothing but the substance itself modified; and therefore to ask whether the modification can exist without the substance, is to ask whether substance can be without substance.

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CHAPTER XXII.

Answers to some difficulties with respect to substance and subsistence.

333.
The modification of one being does not become that of another.

THE accident of a thing, according to some persons, is no more than the accidental modification. Now this modification may exist without the thing that is modified by it: the whiteness of a lily, for example, may be found without the lily itself, of which it is the whiteness, since it is to be seen in another lily.

I answer, as has been hinted elsewhere, that the whiteness of the second lily is not the whiteness of the first (N^o. 300.); as the former, in the natural state, is nothing but the first lily that is white, and the latter no more than the second lily that is white, without their having really any thing in common together but a perfect resemblance of colour; the whiteness of the first lily, which is the accidental modification, being, in a natural state, nothing but the substance itself, that has nothing of the substance of the second lily.

334.
Difference of substance and subsistence according to faith.

Religion teaches us, *that there is in God one only substance or nature, and three persons*; whereas, in Jesus

Jefus Christ, man and God, there is but one person, and two substances, or *natures*. These are truths of which we cannot rationally doubt, under the pretence of not comprehending them: it has been already shown on different occasions, that there are things true, which we cannot have any idea of naturally; but as, for reasons that have been assigned, I look for nothing in this Treatise but the first notions suggested by the pure light of Nature, and as that alone cannot supply the idea of the difference found between substance and person, I leave it to Divines to explain the matter: it is sufficient to observe here, as hath been repeatedly said, that this difference is nevertheless real; and it is reasonable to believe it, on the word of God declared by the voice of Religion.

It may be asked perhaps, on this occasion, whether I can have an idea, and speak rationally, of an object that is beyond the reach of my capacity. I answer in the affirmative: I may speak of it as of an idea that is not distinct, precise, and clear; for otherwise there would no longer be any faith: but I speak of it as a general idea suggesting to the mind something that exists by divine omnipotence, and that is not the less really existent for being incomprehensible to me.

A man born blind, who hears others speak, and who speaks himself, of colours of which he

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has

335.
As a man born
blind can have
an idea of co-
lours.

PART II.

has no idea by natural experience, believes their existence however, as he is persuaded that all those who speak to him on the subject are people of sense and judgement, whose veracity he cannot doubt according to reason: he is therefore convinced that the word *colour* means something that really exists, under which, as a man born blind, he has never had, nor ever can have, a clear and distinct idea. Thus, he who would speak rationally of substance and subsistence, according to faith, might very well be compared to a man, born blind, who should give a treatise on the senses from his own particular experience: he would not include the sense of seeing, of which he had no experience or idea; but he would not therefore deny its real existence: on the contrary, he would undoubtedly believe it on the testimony of others; but he would wisely refrain from giving any explanation on that article, that he might not incur the proverbial reproach, and be said *to speak like a blind man of colours*.

If a man born blind may and ought to believe the real existence of colours, on human testimony alone, with how much better foundation, on divine authority, infallible in itself, may and ought we to believe the mysteries of religion, though we naturally have no knowledge of them! Such are the general arguments against libertinism

tinism and infidelity, to which pretended free-thinkers will never be able to oppose any thing that is capable of making an impression on rational minds.

CHAP. XXIII.

CHAPTER XXIII.

Of simple and compound.

THIS chapter might serve as an appendix to that of unity. If we, in fact, consider any thing whatever as one, and as having no parts different or separable from each other, we call it *simple*. In that sense, it properly belongs only to intelligent beings to be simple, and particularly to the first being, that is, God; for, as we conceive nothing separable in the substance of an intelligent being, neither have we any idea that it can be composed of parts. To suppose the least thing separable in the substance of an intelligent being, would be to suppose it, at the same time, capable of being destroyed entirely.

If we take the word *simple* in this precise meaning, we shall not find any thing simple in material beings; nor any thing that is perfectly *one*; for any body may always be so divided as that its substance shall still subsist in the parts after

R 2

their

336.
The relation
simplicity has to
unity.

PART II.

337.
In what manner
bodies are said to
be simple.

their separation; therefore one cannot be the other, nor is the body simple.

This term however is used, with respect to bodies, in a sense analogous to that in which it is applied to minds; and a body is called *simple*, in the parts of which no sensible difference is commonly distinguished. Thus we say water is a *simple* body: some persons have said the same of fire, gold, silver, and of what we comprehend under the name of elements and metals; because, in taking only a superficial view of these things, as we generally do in the common practice of life, we perceive no difference of parts in them: yet it is evident, that this difference does not less really exist, as may be seen in those bodies that are analysed by chymical operations. We there find no body but what has different parts, and consequently no body that is absolutely simple, and not compounded; unless it be perhaps what chymists denominate *caput mortuum*, which is a kind of earth they cannot reduce into specific parts that appear different to us. This earth might therefore be called the most simple of bodies.

338.
Compound is
opposed to simple.

What is opposed to simple is called compound, and results from several parts, especially when they are of different kinds: but this matter furnishes no information upon any subject that merits to delay the Reader's attention.

C H A P-

CHAPTER XXIV.

Of what is necessary, accidental, or free,

THERE is scarcely any term more simple and clear, to express the general idea men conceive by the word *necessary*, than the word itself.

If I say, what is necessary is of such a nature that it is impossible it should not be, it may be asked, *What is the impossibility of not being?* To which I shall not be able to answer more readily than to the question, *What is necessity?*

A more precise idea perhaps might be given of necessity by saying, *it is that which is of such a nature, that no will can prevent it from being as it is: and accidental is what is not necessary.*

It follows, that necessity, taken in the strict sense of the word, is opposed only to the free-will of an intelligent and spiritual being; for a material being cannot be opposed to another material being, unless with regard to the will of some intellectual being; and if, in a material being, any thing accidental be found, it is by the free-will of an intellectual being. This matter requires explanation.

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When

339.
The idea of *necessary* is easily conceived.

340.
Necessity is opposed only to free-will.

PART II.

341.

No event is necessary, with respect to the will of God,

When we say it is necessary, and not accidental, that a stone descends and flames ascend, that ice cools and fire warms; this necessity is not with respect to the will of God, who may, whenever he pleases, prevent ice from cooling, and fire from warming. In this sense, *necessity*, strictly speaking, is not applicable but to the existence and nature of God himself, which cannot be prevented by any will whatever.

342.

What is accidental has free-will for its cause.

On the contrary, what is *contingent* or *accidental* has free-will for its more or less remote cause; when a plague happens, or any other contagious distemper, it immediately proceeds from a necessary cause, which is, the corruption of the air; and the necessary cause of the corruption of the air is a great number of dead bodies, or a quantity of blood vitiated by unwholesome food; scarcity or famine is the necessary cause of unwholesome food; the necessary cause of scarcity and famine is war, which interrupts commerce and agriculture: all these are necessary causes; but the cause of war is the free-will of princes, who begin and continue it at their pleasure. If it had not free-will for its more or less immediate cause, it would have nothing *accidental* or *contingent*.

343.

Every thing is found necessary until we ascend to free-will.

In all natural events, we may, in like manner, ascend from one necessary cause to another, until we reach the primary cause, that is, the free-will

will of God, which has given to matter such a determinate degree and course of motion, as shall, from one immediate cause to another, have necessarily produced the event, or effect, in question; and, in a hundred thousand worlds, it must always necessarily happen so, unless the order and gradation should be interrupted by the intervention of some free-will.

We may see an example of this in the overflowing of a river, the necessary and immediate cause of which is, the uncommon quantity of waters swelling beyond the capacity of its bed: this redundancy is necessarily occasioned by the melting of snow and ice: these are necessarily dissolved by the return of the sun in the vernal season: the return of the sun is effected by its regular course, which is nothing but the determinate motion given to the sun, and the rest of the machine of the world, by the free-will of its First Author. This detail might be carried much further, in order to make it more plausible; but what has been said is sufficient to shew that every thing which happens in the universe proceeds from necessary causes, necessarily determined by each other; and that none of those causes can originally have any determination but by a free-will: so that every thing in the universe is necessary, and nothing is contingent, but the effect of a free-will.

344.
Example taken
from natural
effects.

PART II.

345.
What chance is.

It may be asked, on this occasion, what is the nature of that we call *chance*? It is but an effect of the cause of which we are ignorant; but it is clear that there can be no effect without a necessary or free cause, or at least partly necessary and partly free. It is this mixture which generally constitutes what is called *chance*, when we can neither discern the necessary cause, the free cause, nor the concurrence of both.

346.
Example.

A gamester throws three sixes with three dice: his adversary happens to throw two sixes and a five, and attributes his ill success to chance; yet it is the effect of his will that gives to his hand certain motions, which he does not consider, and cannot form any judgement of; but, in consequence of these motions, the weight of the dice, the nature and situation of the table, and other necessary causes, joined to free-will, that made him throw the dice, produced the cast which is called the effect of chance. In the Third Part of this work we shall examine whether there are such things as free causes or free-will, and what constitutes their freedom.

CHAPTER XXV.

*Of the nature of what is termed positive, negative,
and privation.*

VARIOUS philosophers have wearied their imagination in order to discover whether *finite* be a negation of *infinite*, or *infinite* a negation of *finite*. Some have asserted, that infinite being beyond every degree of finite, finite is therefore a negation of infinite, by which it is surpassed: others say, as finite is a determinate degree, what is not finite is a negation of whatever is determinate and finite. An idea of the terms will explain this matter.

By the word *positive* I mean any thing whatsoever that exists, or may exist, either in reality, or in thought. It will be proper here to explain a difficulty that naturally occurs with respect to this definition.

If *positive* be what exists in reality, or in thought, *negative* is that which neither exists in reality, nor in thought. How is it then possible to have an idea of what has no existence even in thought, as whatever is in thought is an idea? This would be, to have an idea of negative, and
not

347.
Whether finite
and infinite are
mutual nega-
tions of each
other.

348.
A definition of
positive.

349.
Whether we
have any idea
of negative.

PART II.

350.
In what manner
we conceive
non-entity, or
nothing.

not to have it, at the same time: it would be having it, since it is supposed; and not having it, as it would not be even in thought.

It will be however said, that when we hear, in conversation, the word *nothing*, or *non-entity*, which are negative terms, we understand and conceive what is said to us; and therefore we must have some idea at the time. This is true: we have an idea of words, that is, of the words *nothing* or *non-entity*, from which we separate every idea of any being that might occur to our minds: and such is the true nature of whatever is called *negative*, and *negation*. It is not, people sometimes imagine, a real *nothing*, or *non-entity*; for *nothing* and *non-entity* can neither form any idea, nor be the object of one; for, were either to produce an idea, it would, from that very circumstance, become then something, and cease to be nothing or non-entity: but what is called *negative*, or *negation*, is the separation made by the mind of one idea from another, as of the idea of a thing from the idea of a word: now the separation is not a true nothing, or non-entity; it is an operation of the mind, that disunites, separates, or divides two things or ideas which were, or might be, joined and united; and it is always the separation of one positive from another.

When

When I say, therefore, that *a man is not a brute*, it is saying, *a man is a different creature from a brute*; and when I say, *folly is not wisdom*, it is as if I said, *folly is a different thing from wisdom*. It is the same thing with regard to every negative and negation, and even the word *nothing*, or *non-entity*; as when we say, *nothing appears*: for it is only saying, that *the idea of the word nothing, or non-entity, is separated from the idea of every thing that appears*.

If the word *nothing*, or *non-entity*, were not to express something positive, it would form no idea, as every idea is something positive: neither would it form any sense, as if one were to say, that *nothing, or non-entity, preceded the existence of creatures*; for, in order to precede it, it must be; and *nothing, or non-entity*, is not, nor ever has been. Those who make use of the expression, mean only to say, *that creatures began to exist, or the existence of creatures began, at a time which I conceive within myself as preceded by the sole eternity of God*: but, in whatever light the proposition and expression are considered, they must always form something positive; and all the negative I shall be able to conceive will still be a positive, separated by my thought from another positive. This may be applied to every thing that occurs to the imagination, accompanied by the word *nothing, or non-entity*; as when

we

351.
The meaning of
negative terms.

PART II. we say, *nothing is worthy of God but God himself*; that is, *every thing that is different from God is separated from whatever is worthy of God*; or, in more concise terms, *the only thing worthy of God is God himself*.

352.
An explanation
of them is use-
ful,

It will perhaps be found, that the explanation given here is not more clear than the thing explained: but this is not to be wondered at; for, as we are accustomed to use the word *nothing*, or *non-entity*, in order to express that kind of separation called *negation*, we more readily understand familiar terms than such as are extraordinary and unusual: but this explanation is not therefore less useful to our design; as the business is, to shew how mere nothing can never form any idea; and that, if those words *nothing* and *non entity*, so frequently employed in common conversation, be not reduced to some primitive idea, they produce no sense, but unmeaning sounds, by which the mind is sometimes perplexed to little purpose.

353.
Finite and infinite are negatives of each other.

This explains how we are to solve the difficulty proposed at the beginning of this chapter: we may thence know whether *finite* be a negation of *infinite*, or *infinite* the negation of *finite*; for, according to what has been advanced, the inutility of this question, and a thousand others of a similar kind, appears in the most glaring light. As a negation is no more than a separation,

tion, *infinite* and *finite* are equally negations of each other; and we might therefore very justly define *infinite*, as *a different thing from limited and finite*, but in which the mind is lost; and *finite*, as *something limited*, and not infinite. Without a manifest error, however, we cannot imagine what is limited not to be something positive in itself; as it is either a certain degree or quantity, single or repeated so many times, or a certain proportion with a certain quantity or degree: thus whatever idea we may form of any length of time short of eternity, it must be always finite, because it must be either so many minutes, days, years, or ages. It is the same with every other quantity separated or successive: if it be limited, it is always a certain measure or space, or a certain repetition of a particular measure, &c. which is strictly positive; and infinite is therefore as much the negation of finite, as the latter is of the former. This should be applied to every other negation, as it never is any thing but the separation of two objects, or two ideas.

In order to say a word or two of *privation* at present, we must observe, that it is a real negation, with this only difference, that a negation separates one thing or idea from another thing or idea, without regard to the nature of the objects so separated; whereas *privation* separates an idea or thing, shewing that the things or ideas

354.
What *privation*
is.

se-

PART II.

separated might or ought to be united together. Thus, let whiteness be separated from a coal, or jet, it is a simple negation; but if whiteness be separated from a stone, or alabaster, it is a privation, because we suppose that whiteness might be found in a stone, and must be in alabaster.

CHAPTER XXVI.

Of a whole and its parts.

355.
Whole and parts
are relative
terms.

NOTHING is wanting here but an explanation of words, and such as are commonly supposed to be an explanation of each other. *A whole*, it is said, *is a collection of parts*; and, if we enquire what *parts* are, we are told, *they are what form, or contribute to form, a whole*. But do such words explain or illustrate any thing? No truly: and the reason is, because the idea of *whole* is more clear than any thing else that can be said of it. When we say therefore, that *the whole is greater than any of its parts*, provided we comprehend the meaning of the two words *whole* and *parts*, the matter is immediately obvious to our conception; for it is the most simple use we can make of judgement, and is no more than say.

saying, *that such a thing is that thing, and no other.*

CHAP. XXVI.

We call *whole*, in any object, what is the greatest quantity in it; and we call *part*, what is less: to say therefore, that *the whole is greater than a part*, is saying nothing more than that *what is the greatest quantity in any object is greater than what is less*; or simply, that *what is the greatest is the greatest*: in like manner, when it is said, that *all the parts collectively taken are equal to the whole*, it is saying, that *such a thing is such a thing*; for the parts being all united, or taken collectively, are precisely what is called *the whole*; and the whole is nothing but the parts taken collectively, or a *collection of parts*.

It may be here observed, that every object may be, or not be, *a whole*, or *a part*, according to our fancy; for, by considering it in its fullest extent, it is *a whole*; and by viewing it on the side that does not constitute its greatest extent, it is called *a part*. Besides, what is greatest in an object is often found, with respect to another object, comparatively less: the same thing therefore, in different points of view, is often found to be *a whole*, and *a part*: England is a whole with respect to York, and is something more than the latter; but with regard to Europe, it is no more than a part, because it is included in, and somewhat less than, Europe. These matters are so clear and obvious to the mind, that in

356.
The whole is
often arbitrary.

PART II.

explaining them we can scarcely find any expressions equally perspicuous with the ideas they convey. This has given occasion to certain philosophers to suppose those things incomprehensible, because they could not be explained: whereas they should have said, they were inexplicable because they could be comprehended more clearly than any explanation that might be given of them.

CHAPTER XXVII.

Of duration and time.

357.
To be permanent, is to exist without being destroyed.

WHAT is duration; or to be permanent? It is *to exist free from destruction*. This is the most exact definition that can be given of duration; but the simple word *duration* explains the matter as clearly as that explanation. Whoever would attempt to explain the word *exist*, must find himself equally embarrassed; and it would be no less difficult to explain how those ideas first came to be formed in our minds; for we possess them more intimately than we can express.

358.
The explanation of Mr. Locke is useless and obscure.

When Mr. Locke, therefore, and Mr. Le Clerc his follower or abbreviator, endeavoured to explain

plain how the idea of duration is formed in us by the succession of our thoughts that present themselves to the mind one after another, they may have made ingenious remarks; but they have said nothing to explain the nature or origin of the idea we have of duration: for, though no succession of thoughts were to take place in our minds, and that we had no more than a single thought, we should nevertheless have the idea of duration, especially if it should be an afflictive thought. I do not therefore conceive what Mr. Locke means by saying, that *the idea of duration is suggested to us by constant changes of succession, whose parts are continually perishing*. In God, for example, in whom there is no succession, is not his being continually permanent? and is he not sensible of its permanency or duration?

I should imagine therefore, without entering into a deeper scrutiny, that the idea of duration in general is no other, as hath been already said, but what we have of a being or action, while we conceive that being, or action, to be neither discontinued nor destroyed.

Besides the idea of duration, we have likewise the idea of a measure or degree of duration, that is not duration itself, though we often confound them together, as we are apt to do with regard

359.
The measure of
duration is time.

PART II.

to our sentiments, and their effects, causes, or other circumstances.

360.
Time is the regular revolution of a body.

The measure of duration is only what we call *time*; and time is nothing but *the regular revolution of some sensible object*, as the annual course of the sun, the monthly of the moon, or the diurnal of a hand on the dial-plate of a clock.

361.
Parts of time called time also.

The attention we pay to this regular revolution is what precisely forms in us the idea of time. The interval of this revolution, being divided into various shorter intervals, forms the idea of the parts of time, to which we also give the name of *time*, longer or shorter, according to the several intervals of the revolution.

362.
Applications of the idea of time.

When we have once formed this idea of time, we apply it to every duration that we conceive or suppose equal to such interval of regular revolution: and we thereby give to duration itself the name of time, applying the name of the measure to the thing measured, though the duration measured be not, in fact, the time by which it is measured, and to which it is applied. Thus, God had duration before time; that is, *he was, without ceasing to be, previous to the creation of the world, and before the regular revolution of any body.*

363.
Exaggerated difficulties with respect to the nature of time and duration.

I am surprised therefore that so many philosophers have spoken of *time* and *duration* as of things inexplicable or incomprehensible: *si non rogas,*

rogas, intelligo, say they; and, according to Mr. Locke's paraphrase, the more I endeavour to investigate the nature of time, the less I comprehend it. Time, that unravels all things, is itself incomprehensible. All this mystery however consists of two words, that have been explained above. Thus a confusion of ideas generally proceeds from language and expressions.

CH. XXVII.

In all those metaphysical researches that appear so intricate, all that we have to do, as hath been already observed, is to consider the most simple ideas we have in our minds, and the names affixed to them by custom, in order to discover what we should hold as first truths with regard to them.

364.
Metaphysical
researches with
respect to ideas
and names.

By these two methods we immediately find the idea or notion of *duration* and *time*: when I say, I have an idea of a being as not ceasing to be, this is what is called *duration*: I have an idea of this duration as being measured by the regular revolution of a body, or by the intervals of that revolution; and this is what I call *time*. These notions appear to me as clear as it is possible for them to be; and whoever should attempt to set them in a clearer light, would not act more wisely than he who should endeavour to explain in what manner two and two make four, and not five.

365.
The ideas of
time and dura-
tion are as clear
as any we can
form.

PART II.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

Of relation.

366.
What is meant
by relation, and
its foundation.

IT is evident that we perceive various parts and circumstances in the same object. When one of those parts or circumstances occasions us to think of another, this is what is called *relation*; and this first object, so far as it gives us occasion to compare it with another, is what I think is called, in the language of the schools, *the foundation of the relation*.

367.
Its common definition.

Relation is generally defined by saying, that it is *the reference one thing bears to another*; in Latin, *respectus unius ad aliud*: but, as *relation* or *reference* are essentially or strictly the same idea, that is to say, *relation is the relation of one thing to another*, it remains equally to be known, what *relation* or *reference* is, and in what it consists: I think, as I have already observed, that it might be better defined as *the occasion an object gives, in some particular, of thinking of another object*.

368.
Le Clerc endeavours to explain relation better.

Mr. Le Clerc has endeavoured to explain the matter by saying, that *relation is an idea in an object, that includes the idea of another object*; which he expresses in Latin thus—*ea vocamus relationes*

lationes quibus fit ut consideratio rei alicujus, aliis considerationem includat: to which he adds, *that there are relations AD INFINITUM*; as there is no one thing but what may occasion us to think of another, and that we unite at pleasure all sorts of ideas: but if every thing in the world be relative, and may occasion us to think of another, why do we more particularly call some relative rather than others? or why does not each thing occasion us to think of another? since, in presenting to our minds the idea of itself, it should also present us with the idea of another thing which it includes. This Mr. Le Clerc does not explain. What follows may serve to illustrate the matter. Every thing, or rather every idea of a thing, except the general idea of being, is composed of several particular ideas; so that the total idea of the thing includes both some distinctive and some common idea.

If the total idea of man, for example, results from the particular ideas of *animal* and *rational*; the idea of animal is common to other beings besides man; and the idea of rational is distinctive, or peculiar to man: thus the idea of animal, common both to a man and an elephant, gives me occasion, if I chuse to make use of it, of thinking of an elephant when I think of a man, as the former is an animal as well as the latter. These are relations by which one object furnishes

369.
How this is to
be understood.

PART II.

us with an occasion of thinking of another; so that we may, as we like, neglect or embrace the occasion either of thinking or not thinking of another object: but they are not relations we necessarily perceive, and which naturally remind us of another object. If we consider things as to their distinctive idea, it is by no means true that they are all relative; and yet it is the distinctive idea that properly constitutes the relation of things, as they are strictly called relative only when their distinctive idea necessarily recalls the idea of another thing: thus the ideas of *father*, *master*, and *creator*, are in themselves relative, including in their distinctive idea the idea of *child*, *scholar* or *disciple*, and *creature*; as the distinctive idea of *father*, is to have children; the idea of *master*, to have some disciples or scholars; of a *creator*, to have creatures.

370.
Two kinds of
RELATIONS or
RELATIVES.

From these two kinds of ideas, the distinctive and common, we have also the clear and precise notion of two sorts of relations; the one of resemblance, and the other of essence.

371.
Arbitrary relation.

Besides the two kinds of relations above mentioned, a third sort may be distinguished, that we shall call arbitrary; which, by depending in some degree on the imagination, is, on that account, the more important, and more difficult to be explained: it consists in the occasion which an idea arbitrarily formed gives us of recollecting

ano-

another idea, and of forming a judgement with respect to those ideas, that has no truth, but with regard to the arbitrary idea we have formed in our minds: such are the ideas of *greatness*, *goodness*, *excellence*, &c. If we should, for example, never have seen or heard of any hill or mountain of greater height than a quarter of a mile, as might happen to some of the inhabitants of the Low Countries, a mountain a mile high would appear a considerable one to such people; but this mountain would be looked upon as inconsiderable and trifling to the people of the Alps, who are accustomed to see mountains of much greater height. This example is so striking, that there is no necessity for any other to make us sensible of the nature of relations that are founded on an arbitrary idea, formed either by accident and occasion, or by our own fancy; as, if I should take it into my head, without any foundation, that pearls are generally an inch in diameter, I must, in that case, look upon all the pearls we have in England as very small.

What has been here said of greatness is manifestly applicable to all the other qualities, of *long*, *broad*, *happy*, *unhappy*, *convenient*, *inconvenient*, *easy*, *difficult*, *rich*, *poor*, *good*, *bad*, *excellent*, and many others of a similar nature, that have no determinate sense, but by a relation founded on an

372.
It falls on various qualities.

PART II.

arbitrary and accidental idea formed within our own minds. A man thought himself miserable in having a slight head-ach: being afterwards seized with a giddiness and violent swimming in the head, the first reflection that occurred to him was, *how happy he was when he had only his first head-ach*. We here see that the arbitrary idea, on which the comparison and relation are founded, changes the signification, and in a manner the nature, of the qualities of *happy* and *miserable*.

373.
Illusion, as to
the idea we ima-
gine we have of
excellence.

This may serve to shew us the illusion of certain philosophers, who, like the author of Logic, intitled the Art of Thinking, assert, that there is to be discovered in all men an idea of *excellence*. This, properly considered, means no more than that every man, according to his fancy, forms an arbitrary idea of *excellence*, just as chance, occasion, experience, constitution, or imagination, happens to suggest a certain degree of goodness which he calls excellence or perfection, but which, not being the same with others, no longer constitutes the same idea of excellence in different minds, as it is entirely different in all men, who all concur only in making use of the same word *excellence*, in order to express the highest degree which each of them fancies of a useful or pleasing quality: but this highest degree being arbitrary and various in all men, all men like-
wise,

wise, according to different circumstances, have different ideas of excellence.

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In fine, what merits our attention, and has escaped that of Locke, with respect to relative and non-relative ideas, is, that, in the examples he has given of *absolute* or *positive*, that is to say, non-relative ideas, such as *white*, *black*, *happy*, *sweet*, &c. those very ideas are not entirely absolute in general practice, and according to the common application made of them by the mind.

374.
Even absolute ideas become arbitrary in the common practice of life.

The mind, for example, rarely applies the idea of *white*, or *sweet*, but with respect to a certain degree of whiteness and sweetness, which it actually fancies, and compares with a certain arbitrary idea it has. To illustrate this by an example: in Africa, a yellow or olive complexion is considered and called *fair*; the same complexion, seen by the same person among Europeans, no longer appears *fair*, but rather *black*: we therefore call nothing *white* or *fair* but what is so with respect to a certain degree of whiteness we have in our minds, and which we judge suitable or unsuitable to the object we call *white*; so that, if the whiteness of the thing appears to us in a less degree than what we arbitrarily consider as genuine, we no longer esteem it *white*. Thus it daily happens that we look upon linen and paper as white; but, when shewn us with other linen or paper of much superior whiteness, we begin

to

PART II.

to think them brown. This is an evident sign that we have no fixed or entirely absolute idea as to the term *white*; for, if it were so, we must, in every circumstance, always consider as white the thing in which we should constantly find the same degree of whiteness.

375.
Extrinsic deno-
minations.

It is necessary to say a word or two of relations called *extrinsic denominations*: these are *qualities attributed to a being, with respect only to the disposition of another being relative to it*; for example, *to be seen, known, admired, preceded, &c.* which manifestly suppose the disposition of another being that *sees, knows, admires, precedes it, &c.* In like manner, when we say a thing is *first, similar, equal, &c.* we necessarily suppose the disposition or situation of something else.

And, in fact, whoever speaks of a *first*, implies another object that is second; he that mentions *similar*, or *equal*, speaks of something to which the thing mentioned is *similar* or *equal*: so that, were we to suppose all beings destroyed, except one only, though this one should still remain as it was before, it would nevertheless cease to be seen, known, praised, admired, or esteemed; to be the first, or third; or be followed, accompanied, &c. for, were it to be alone, by whom should it be seen? of whom or what would it be the *first* or *last*? and to whom or what would it be *similar* or *equal*? &c. These are attributes or depomi-
nations

nations merely *extrinsic*; that is to say, attributes foreign to the thing, and such as are attributed to it only by supposing the disposition of another being, that changes nothing in the thing itself to which those extrinsic denominations are applicable.

I say *merely extrinsic*; for, *to be beaten*, for example, might be looked upon as an extrinsic denomination, as it implies the disposition of another being: but it is plain that he who is *beaten* is changed in himself; and therefore, *to be beaten* is not a denomination merely extrinsic: for the same reason, *to be moved, warmed, divided, enlarged, &c.* *extrinsic denominations*, however, are not less real relations, as they include the idea of another thing besides the one named.

We shall conclude this article with remarking the frivolous perplexity and trouble in which people sometimes involve themselves, in order to determine whether relations subsist in things independent of our thoughts; as, for example, whether numbers, which are at bottom nothing but relations, be things subsisting of themselves, and distinct from our minds: in order to resolve the question, we have only to explain the terms or ideas.

If we understand by *number* the beings that subsist distinct from us, each in its unity, but that give occasion to the mind to conceive a collection

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376.

When the other does not make any alteration in the thing.

377.

Whether relations are independent of our thought.

378.

Equivocation in the word NUMBER.

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lection of unities under a single idea, which takes the name of *number*; in that case, number does exist independent of the thought and mind; that is, things numbered, or different unities conceived by us under a single idea, exist. If we mean by *number* that thought of the mind which unites different unities under a single idea; or if we understand the relation of those unities, so that the second unity supposes in our minds the idea of the first, and the third the idea of the second; or, in fine, if we mean that faculty the mind has of multiplying at pleasure and combining those abstracted ideas of unities, either one with the other, one with respect to the other, or one separate from the other, without any regard to things distinct from our minds—number, in that sense, is not independent of the mind and thought; as it is, in that case, the mere exercise of them with respect to things numbered. *To be numbered*, however, is an *extrinsic denomination*, which supposes an intelligence that numbers them, and sees the relation one unity has to another, or to several unities: this relation is called *second, third, &c.* considering unities as succeeding one another, and is named *two, three, four, &c.* viewing unities collectively together in their totality.

PART

P A R T III.

First Truths relative to Spiritual Beings.

P. A. R. T. III.

THE TRUTHS RELATIVE TO SPIRITUAL BEINGS



CHAPTER I.

Of the nature of spiritual beings in general, and of the human soul in particular.

WE understand by the word *soul*, or *mind*, a substance similar to that which is in us capable of the operation we call *idea*, *thought*, or *knowledge*, and of another operation, called *willing* or *desiring*. These two operations, the second of which supposes the first, and which consequently spring from the same substance, called *mind* or *soul*, are considered as having each its peculiar faculty. What is called *idea*, *thought*, or *knowledge*, has the *understanding* for its faculty; what is termed *willing* has for faculty the *will*: that is, speaking with precision, the soul, while it thinks, is called *understanding*; and when it wills, or desires, is named *will*.

If it be asked, what *idea*, *thought* or *knowledge*, *will* or *desire*, are, I shall not attempt to give any definition of them, in order to make them

379.
What is meant
by *SOUL*, or
MIND.

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them more clear than they already are to the Reader. I might perhaps explain those words *idea* and *will* by other words that would nearly express the same thing, but not make them more intelligible; as their signification is clearly in our minds, and as fully as it can be, conceived, if we pay any attention to what is expressed by the words *idea* or *knowledge*, *desire* or *will*.

380.
Whether the
soul is corpo-
real.

Some persons imagine they are justifiable in asking, on this occasion, whether it be really true that we are possessed of a soul or mind, as it is not known whether what we call mind be not a thing corporeal, resulting from particles of matter imperceptible to our senses, and even to our knowledge and reflections, which are, in fact, all derived from our senses: hence they would endeavour to conclude, that, as we have no evident certainty of the matter, we should not absolutely deny the mind to be corporeal. Nay, they pretend to give additional weight to this difficulty by the following reflection—that the soul must be dependent on the body, and matter in its substance as well as its operations; as *the nature of the operation follows the nature of the being*, according to an axiom admitted by philosophers; so that, as the operation of the soul is manifestly dependent on the body, of which we are made sensible by experience, the substance of the soul is likewise dependent on it, and is in itself

cor-

corporeal, and a kind of modification of the body and matter. In order to answer these objections, let us examine them one after another, and distinguish what is clear and certain from what is involved in obscurity and uncertainty.

1st. All that can be attributed to the mind, with the utmost efforts of human imagination, is that of its being corporeal or material; but this does not at all affect the reality of its existence. Be it material or otherwise, be it composed or not composed of atoms, dependent or independent of the body; in whatever manner we consider it, there still exists in me something that *thinks*, and *wills* or *desires*: this something is what I call my *mind* or *soul*, and which I distinguish, with the strongest and clearest evidence, from every being in which I can discern nothing of what I call *thinking* and *desiring*. Now every being, in which I can perceive nothing of what I call to *think* and *desire*, is what I call *body*; and, in what I call *body*, I observe also properties termed *space* and *motion*, which I can by no means perceive in what I call *mind* in general; nor can I even perceive the mind to be susceptible of those qualities. Thus I both clearly and precisely distinguish what I call *mind*, and what I name *body*, without any possibility of doubting hereafter either of their existence, or real difference, as I find each of those beings

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mani-

381.

The question does not alter the truth of the existence of spiritual beings.

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manifestly susceptible of modifications that are not applicable to the other.

382.
We are ignorant
of their internal
nature.

To know, at present, in what the internal nature of minds consists, what constitutes their real essence, and their essential and physical difference from bodies, in order to discern intuitively whether it be possible for thought to result from a combination of imperceptible particles, is a point no way necessary to the knowledge here sought. This knowledge neither ought, nor can be of a different nature from what human knowledge essentially is; and this can never reach the internal nature of beings; but it is not therefore the less evident or convincing.

383.
Their existence
is not therefore
less certain.

I neither know nor perceive evidently the internal nature of fire, nor its radical and physical difference from water: Must I therefore conclude, that no fire exists; that its nature is not different from that of water; or that I must not act quite differently, with regard to the one, from what I should do with respect to the other? Shall I therefore judge it improper to immerse the body in water by way of refreshing it, or to approach the fire in order to warm me? Would this knowledge of the internal nature of things beyond our capacity, be of any advantage to us with regard to our conduct and opinions in life?

The

The application of all this is natural to our subject. We know not the internal nature of our mind so far as it may be known, or as God knows it; but we know it as far as we are capable of knowing it, or as is consistent with human understanding: therefore we no less see, as far as men can see, for the use and conduct of life, its difference from the body, and that one has nothing similar to the other.

^{384.}
We know them
as far as we are
capable of know-
ing them.

To conclude however, as some endeavour to do, that the human mind or soul is corporeal, because we do not intuitively see whether our thoughts may not result from a combination of material particles imperceptible to our senses, is much the same as attempting to conclude that the body is spiritual, because we do not evidently discern whether it be not some thought that constitutes motion, impenetrability, and space, which are modifications that appear to us essential to body and matter. Into what strange absurdities must we fall, when we pretend to draw conclusions from a principle of which we are totally ignorant! This is however the method which some modern philosophers seem to have established; but it is the most frivolous and idle conduct of which a rational mind is capable: for, in short, what we do not see, is, with respect to our knowledge, as if it had no existence; we cannot argue or reason about it,

^{385.}
We should not
judge the soul
to be corporeal.

PART III.

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of their internal
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CHAP. I.

384.
We know them
as far as we are
capable of know-
ing them.

385.
We should not
judge the soul
to be corporeal.

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386.
In what sense
the soul might
be said to be
corporeal.

as it affords nothing to think, imagine or conclude. Let us confine the mind within its proper limits, and we shall always be rational; if we go beyond them, our thoughts must be visionary, and our language unintelligible.

Besides, when we imagine that the idea of those who hold the soul to be corporeal is not improbable, as its operation is corporeal, we should examine what is meant by these words, *the operation of the soul is corporeal*. Do we thereby understand that the soul operates only by the mutual relation and reciprocal connection that are between the soul and the body, while the body is in a certain disposition? If we mean no more, the matter is indubitable, and daily experience shews it; but, if the soul cannot act without the body, the machine of the body, on the other hand, cannot act without the soul; and, as the dependence of the body on the soul does not lead us to say that the body is spiritual, neither should the dependence of the soul on the body induce us to declare the soul corporeal. Those two parts of man have an intimate connection in their operations; but a connection between two parts does not make one the other.

387.
The union of
the soul and
body is incom-
prehensible.

Should I be asked, however, whence arose so necessary a relation, and such a wonderful connection, I can give no reply from the mere
light

light of reason; I cannot penetrate so far, neither will I endeavour. Those who have attempted it have sometimes displayed a fertile imagination, but never adduced one solid argument on the subject. There are many people of this turn; but it is not that of a sound philosopher; for, by frequently indulging the mind in the pursuit of vain notions, it gradually loses a relish for judicious ideas, and is soon led to confound one with the other: besides, as persons of this cast are conscious that their imaginary notions do not carry conviction, they are not apt to be firmly convinced of any thing: and indeed we see minds of this sort easily seduced by the glimmering of a new discovery, and ready to relinquish ideas to which they were blindly attached, in order to embrace opinions directly contrary. To avoid such inconsistencies, let us never undertake to explain what is inexplicable, nor to comprehend things unintelligible.

As the connexion between the soul and body does not make the body spiritual, we should be no less certain that this connection does not render the soul corporeal; though we had not other proofs from religion and reason on the subject. Notwithstanding this incomprehensible connexion, we clearly perceive however that the soul is not the body, as fire is not water;

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that

388.

The soul is evidently different from the body.

PART III.

that all the experimental properties of the one are by no means the properties of the other; that the two ideas we have of them are as different and as distinct, at least, as from any other objects whatsoever, in which we can discern a manifest disparity; and, in fine, that, as we have no more room to suspect *thought* to be a modification of the body, than *space* to be a modification of thought, we cannot therefore rationally deny the body and mind to be two different substances.

CHAPTER II.

Of the properties of the soul.

389.
TO THINK and
WILL are pro-
perties of a spi-
ritual substance.

AFTER having established the reality and existence of a something within us, which we find capable of two functions that we call *thinking* and *desiring*, and which does not appear to us to have any relation, as to substance, with what we denominate body, we should look upon it as a preposterous abuse of all language, and a subversion of every human idea, not to consider the soul henceforth as a substance different from the body. Of this substance of the soul we have now to examine the peculiar properties, besides

besides the two essential, which we term *understanding*, and *will*; or, in other words, the faculty of *thinking*, and the faculty of *willing* or *desiring*.

In reality, there seems to be but little occasion for this enquiry; for, as there are none of my Readers who are not sensible of every thing that passes within them, with a little attention they may know, or even they already know, as much, from their own reflections, as any explanation of mine can possibly convey; and scarcely any thing remains for me to do, but to point out the names suitable to the faculties and sensations of which they daily experience the effects, in order to enable them by that means to avoid confusion in their arguments and expressions on a subject of so great importance.

The soul forms *ideas* or *thoughts*; this is what is called *intelligence*: the intelligence is sometimes solely taken up with itself, or with what passes within it, without attending to the idea of any body, or any corporeal image; this I call *pure intelligence*: if it conceives the idea of a body, or of a corporeal image, I call that *imagination*, or *fancy*: the soul, having laid aside ideas for a while, afterwards recalls them; this is termed *memory*: it acquires the greater part of its ideas by the help of the senses; and, when it actually derives them from that channel, it is called

390.
Experience
shews what
these faculties
are.

391.
Pure intelli-
gence, imagina-
tion, memory,
sensation, and
sentiment.

PART VI.

called *sensation*: if the sensation be accompanied by any thing pleasing or displeasing, I then call it more particularly *sentiment*: the peculiar faculty of the soul, whence we imagine sensation and sentiment to proceed, is called *the sensitive soul*.

392.
Various signifi-
cations of the
word WILL.

The *will* assumes various names, like the *understanding*: if it be necessarily inclined to objects, as when it inclines to happiness in general, I call it *natural inclination*, or *propensity*: if it inclines to an object, and yet has the power of resisting that inclination, I call it *free-will*: and when it has some liking to an object, the soul not being determined by free-will to indulge that liking, I give it the name of *disposition* or *tendency*.

The word *will* is also sometimes taken for the faculty itself of *willing* or *desiring*; and, on other occasions, for the actual exercise of the will: in fine, it is taken, at other times, in a more vague sense, applicable to all the various significations that have been mentioned, without particularly indicating one more than another.

393.
Locke makes
free-will de-
pendent on the
understanding.

With respect to *free-agency* and *will*, Mr. Locke, and Mr. Le Clerc in copying him, have made a copious and elaborate dissertation in order to undeceive those who might imagine that *free-will* is the same faculty with the *will*; whereas, say they, it is a *faculty of the understanding*. After
repeat-

repeatedly perusing those profound reflections with serious attention, I must confess they struck me as the part of that philosopher's works in which he seems to have least understood himself. And, indeed, can any person be mistaken as to the idea of those different faculties? Does not every man know that it is the same soul which produces various operations? and, according as we find more or less difference in those operations, do we not suppose a greater or less number of different faculties whence they proceed; although these different faculties are, in fact, but one and the same substance, which is the soul? But in this one substance I have never known any person but Mr. Locke to confound the faculty of *understanding* with that of *free-will*; and I even believe that it is impossible to confound them together, if they are considered with any degree of attention. Is not the soul capable of thinking? Considering it simply in that light, I call it *understanding* or *intelligence*. Is it not capable, on certain occasions, of indulging or rejecting the desire of a thing by its own will and choice? In that respect, I call it *freedom* or *free-will*. Should it be thought better to admit but two principal faculties in the soul, that is, the *understanding* and *will*, to which the rest might be referred, it is plain that the capacity

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city of desiring a thing, or not desiring it, relates more immediately, and more naturally, to the *will* than to the *understanding*.

The terms being thus explained, in ten or twelve full pages of Mr. Locke on the subject there will appear much perplexity and trouble that he might have avoided. It is surprising that Mr. Le Clerc should have had patience enough to copy so many obscurities, without ever endeavouring to throw any light upon them. It has been suspected that these writers had some secret motives for their conduct on the occasion: out of respect to them, I shall avoid entering into any enquiry on the matter. What they however have omitted, I shall endeavour to supply in subsequent remarks on the idea and nature of liberty.

CHAPTER III.

Of the liberty of the human soul.

IT is certain that there is a something in us, which we call *liberty* or *freedom*. We understand what we mean when we pronounce these words, and consequently we affix an idea to them. This idea is the idea of that we experience in ourselves in what we call *the exercise of our liberty*; which exercise, being an internal sentiment, is also of consequence an idea as clear and distinct as possibly can be.

394.
What is called
free in us.

I request therefore, that every one will recollect what his thoughts are, when he hears another say, or when he makes use of, the following words—*I am free in that respect, and I will do as I like on the occasion*. For example, in the choice of two guineas that may be offered to me: if any person should take it into his head to insist seriously that I am under the necessity of taking one rather than the other, all the answer I should give him would be to laugh at the absurdity; so intimately and necessarily am I persuaded that it is in my power to take the first instead of the second, or the second instead of the first. Some persons

395.
The idea affixed
to this expression.

PART III.

persons say that this example does not demonstrate an exercise of liberty, because there is no reason for giving a preference on either side, or taking one guinea rather than the other. But their observation is foreign to the purpose: the question is not to know whether it be necessary to have a reason, and what reason we should have, for the exercise of liberty: we only want to know whether it be not in my power to take, or not to take, one of the guineas; to take the first in preference to the second, or the second instead of the first? Nor can there indeed be given a more simple, precise, distinct, and just idea of liberty, than what every man feels from this example. People may make use of what other terms they please: but it is to the idea I have mentioned that men commonly affix the word *liberty*; and, in order to define what it means, I say it is *the disposition a man feels within himself, of his capacity to act or not to act, to chuse or not to chuse a thing; at the same moment.*

396.
Whether it be
in our power to
do, or not to do,
certain things.

But it will be said perhaps, it is on that itself which passes within us that all the difficulty hangs. We are indeed sensible that we chuse one of the two guineas, and not the other; and, to speak with still greater precision, that, at a certain time, we take one of the two guineas, or we do not take it: but we have no idea that we take it, or chuse it, in such a manner, that,
at

at the same moment, by the mere power and determination of our will, we may refrain from taking it.

That all men have the sentiment above mentioned, as to taking or not taking one of two guineas, is a fact to which each person can bear evidence himself; and, if the testimony of any one appear to contradict that of others, and that it be necessary to determine which of these two opposite sentiments is right, we must then recur to what has been laid down as the foundation of this Treatise, with respect to the rule of truth called *common sense*, or *the general opinion of mankind*. Should any doubt still remain about the matter, it may, I think, be entirely removed by the following reflection.

You say I am not free, and that it does not depend on the mere determination of my will and choice whether I shall move my hand or not. If that be the case, it must necessarily be decreed, that, within a quarter of an hour hence, I either shall, or shall not, raise my hand thrice successively: I cannot therefore alter this necessary determination. This being supposed, in case I lay a wager on one side rather than the other, I can be a winner only on one side, that is, either by laying that I shall raise my hand thrice, or that I shall not. If you seriously pretend that I am not free, you cannot reasonably refuse the following

397.
This may be referred to a first truth.

398.
A curious expedient for judging of liberty or free-will.

PART III.

lowing offer: I will lay you a thousand guineas to one, that, with respect to moving my hand, I shall do quite the reverse of what you may contend for, and you shall take which side you please: so that, if you lay that I shall raise my hand, I lay that I will not; and if you lay that I shall not, I lay a thousand guineas to one that I will raise it. Do you think the offer advantageous to you? Answer, Yes or No. If you think it advantageous, why can you not accept the wager without passing for a fool, or being such in reality? And, if you do not consider it as advantageous, whence can such an idea arise, unless from the necessary and invincible opinion you have of my being free, and that it is in my power to make you lose such a wager, not only once, but a million of times if you should have the folly to repeat it so often. This is an argument that is not derived from Scholastics: it is neither abstruse, subtle, nor far-fetched; but it will therefore make a more irresistible and lively impression on the mind; and we may even defy those moderns who have attempted to treat of the subject, to give an answer that may be understood as clearly as the objection, and considered as a rational argument, and not an obscurity.

This new reflection, added to what has been said (N^o. 60.) to confirm the existence of liberty,

or

or free-will, by a proof drawn from the general sentiments of mankind, will, I think, furnish us with the first truths, or ideas, of which the human mind is capable, with respect to free-will. This then is a first principle so clear and obvious, that, whatever objections may be made to it, will only tend, by their obscurity or extravagancy, to confirm us more strongly in the opinion with which Nature inspires all mankind.

CHAP. III.

CHAPTER IV.

Of the act of the understanding requisite for the exercise of free-will.

IT is generally allowed that the will is a blind power; which acts only as it is guided by a light or operation of the understanding; and it is equally admitted that the will cannot incline but to what is good: hence philosophers in general conclude that the understanding must point out to the will what is good, before the latter can be determined and come to action.

As it is likewise unanimously confessed that the understanding is a necessary power, and that we are not masters of the light it holds out to the will, some persons therefore imagine that we

399.
The will is guided by the understanding, which shews what is good or eligible.

400.
The understanding is a necessary power.

do

PART III.

do not possess real liberty or free-will, as the will necessarily acts always in conformity to the light of the understanding, and we are not the masters of that light.

401.
Two lights in
the understand-
ing, in each de-
liberation.

By way of explaining this mystery many people say, that, in all deliberations of the will, that is, on occasions of exercising our liberty, either to act or not act, to will or not will, the understanding holds up two sorts of light, each of which points out to the will what is good on each side: after this, by virtue of its liberty, it is freely determined on one side or the other. These two sorts of light are opinions that regulate the actual exercise of the will, and are nearly like the following: the mind, for example, might say within itself, *It is good to gain heaven; but to gain heaven I must not pursue revenge, therefore it is good not to pursue it*: on the other hand, it might argue thus, *It is good and pleasing to follow my inclination; now this prompts me to pursue revenge, therefore it is good not to refrain from pursuing it*. Between these two *benefits* or *advantages* the will, say philosophers, exercises its liberty, embracing that species of good which is pleasing to it in the moment of determination.

402.
Whether the
will can resist
what the under-
standing repre-
sents as the best.

But other philosophers start a new difficulty, with regard to this method of explaining the exercise of liberty; for, say they, as the will inclines only to what is *good*, and not to what is evil,

evil, it must incline to what is better, in preference to what may be less good: a less good, in respect to what is better, being really bad; and a lesser evil, where there is a necessity of choice, becomes a real good: so that, when it is absolutely necessary to chuse between a greater and less pain, the lesser is a good, and the greater an evil. As the understanding, in our deliberations, is supposed to represent what is best, the will therefore cannot help conforming to it, as it necessarily follows the light of the understanding, which is the light that governs and directs it.

Thus, say they, a man of rank and prudence, who should happen to think of acting the part of a mountebank in public, in order to amuse himself, might form two practical opinions: *It is good to divert the mind; now to play the mountebank in public will divert the mind; therefore it is good to do so.* On the other hand, he might argue after this manner: *It is good to be careful of my reputation; and I shall shew my care of it if I avoid diverting my mind by acting the mountebank; it is therefore good to avoid it.* In these two kinds of good, the understanding perceiving a better on one side, that is, in avoiding to act the mountebank, it is impossible, say they, but he must avoid it; and consequently that man is not free, when every body supposes he really is so.

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404.
The application
of the under-
standing often
depends on the
will.

With respect to these difficulties, many persons reply, that the understanding is indeed a necessary power, so far as to represent necessarily the object it considers; but that it depends on the will to apply it to one object rather than another, or at least to prevent it from being applied to any particular object: thus, say they, the will is always master; for, though it cannot act contrary to the light of the understanding, it has, however, the power to prevent it from having that light, by diverting it from thinking on particular truths.

405.
This reflection
is not sufficient
for the present
question.

This answer only serves to place the difficulty at a greater distance, without solving it; for, in short, if the will be determined to divert the understanding from considering a truth, some light of the understanding must have shewn the will that it is better to divert the thoughts from such a truth: and moreover, as the will, according to them, cannot avoid following the better that is pointed out by the understanding, it will therefore be found, that it was determined, through necessity, to divert its thought from the truth in question.

If all these difficulties be once comprehended, it will be an easy matter to convey a clear idea of the answer I think should be given to them; it is, that several philosophers, by their endeavours to explain the nature of liberty and will, have

have only involved it in greater obscurity by those very explanations. CHAP. IV.

They suppose then, that it is the business of the understanding to shew the will what is best, before the determination of the will; but the best very frequently, as to the point in question, is only so by the disposition itself of the will, which makes the best by its own choice and determination.

406.
The understanding does not shew what is best, independent of the will,

It is true, when the will is determined; the understanding on its part judges at the same time that such a thing is actually the best, without having however preceded the will, unless to point out to it what the object is in itself, and in its true nature, independently of our understanding or will, and of those impressions we may thence receive. The object therefore may be found *better* or *worse* at the mere option of the will, in the actual exercise of its freedom. The two different practical opinions, adduced on this occasion, are of no use in solving the difficulty; for, if it be alledged, that, in different points of view, the judgement represents a better on each side, it is still true that the will chooses one side in preference to the other, and consequently a better preferably to another better; and that to which it is determined becomes, with respect to its choice, actually the *positive* or *real better*, as to circumstances. Now the under-

407.
but in conjunction with it.

PART III.

standing did not represent this absolute better to it, before its own particular and free determination: it is the will alone therefore that is determined between two *bettors*, if I may be allowed so to express myself, and that forms the absolute better by its choice, determining the understanding, at the same time, to judge the party it has embraced better for it, according to circumstances. To speak more properly, the soul then chuses; and, by the same motion, it judges better what it chuses. Now, as far as it chuses and embraces a thing, we call it *will*; and, in judging a thing better, we give it the name of *understanding*: these distinctions, made between the understanding and will, are but different views of a motion of the soul which is the same in fact, and which, under different points of view, receives different appellations. To clear up this point effectually, the Reader is desired to peruse the opinions, or first truths, contained in Part II, Chap. XV.

408.
To what good is
the mind at all
times inclined?

Good, in general, therefore, is said to be any object whatever, to which the will is inclined in preference to another; and, in that sense, we say that the will is always necessarily inclined to what is *good*.

The word *good* is more generally taken for the object to which the will commonly inclines, but abstracted from the idea of its being actually deter-

determined to embrace or reject it: thus the pleasures of the senses are called *good*, and *advantages*; and, when a christian philosopher renounces them, worldly minds consider him as a weak man who quits what is *good*.

This second notion, however, of what is good, appears defective; as, independently even of philosophy or christianity, what is a *good* to one is not the same to another; and what is *good* for most people is not so with respect to some. Champagne wine is good; but it is not so to me, because I do not like it: Music is a *good*, that is, a very great pleasure to some; and it is an *evil*, that is, a pain to others. But, as I have observed, the appellation of *good* has been given to things to which the human will appeared to be most frequently inclined; but it may not be inclined to them, and it is sometimes inclined to other objects different from those which common custom denominates *good*: but none of those objects are by any means the *absolute good* to which the will is always necessarily inclined.

But is not God an *absolute good*? Yes, doubtless, as he is the only object in which we should delight, and that can satisfy the desires of the will, when it is devoted to it; but it is not the *absolute good*, as far as *good* is the object to which the will is always necessarily inclined; as the will

409.
The good, independent of the will, is not the thing in question here.

410.
The will is not always inclined to God, though he is in himself the ABSOLUTE GOOD;

PART III.

is neither necessarily nor always inclined to God; and it is that itself constitutes its culpability.

411.
nor to the ob-
ject of our na-
tural inclina-
tions,

In that sense also, our particular and most natural inclinations, which are discovered in us independent of our liberty, are not precisely our *good*, because we do not always follow them; and it is even frequently very rational not to follow, but resist them. When therefore it is said that free-will is always necessarily inclined to what is *good*, I do not see that this should mean any thing else, but that *it is always inclined to the object to which it inclines*: so that the action by which it inclines to it, in preference to another object, is called *choice*; and that object, inasmuch as the will is inclined to it, is called a *good*.

412.
There is in us a
kind of will that
is not free.

I have said *free-will*; for there is in us a propensity that is likewise called *will*, which is necessary in us, and which necessarily prompts us to wish in general to be happy. This must not be confounded with our particular inclinations, that incline us to particular objects; for neither this necessary propensity, nor natural inclination to what is good in general, is the point in question, when we are speaking of the exercise of liberty.

413.
The understand-
ing informs the
will as to the
object to which
it inclines.

If it should be said that there is no occasion for any act of the understanding to direct free-will to *good*; as every object, to which it inclines

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independently of the act of the understanding, is said to be, is considered, and becomes a *good*, from the very circumstance of its inclining to it; I answer, it is certain that the act of the understanding has no share in forming the *good*, taken in its strict and formal precision, that is, in the precision of that preference which the will gives to one object rather than another: but this preference only supposes an act of the understanding, that has made known what the object preferred is in itself, independently of us; and another act, that has shewn what the object not preferred is. Now, as those two objects are so considered that the will may incline to either, and that, according to different occasions, it does incline sometimes to one, and sometimes to the other, those objects are called and considered as good; though neither, in particular, is by any means that *good* to which the will always necessarily inclines; as it may incline to either the one or the other, and does at different times incline to each.

But if the will be thus inclined of itself, and without any act, to determine the understanding to one object rather than to another, it will then act only because it acts, it will desire or will only because it desires, and that uninfluenced by any motive; which appears incomprehensible. To this I answer, that nothing is incomprehensible

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414.
The will has no occasion for any thing besides itself, in order to incline to a known object.

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in the matter, but the perplexity and confusion voluntarily occasioned by ourselves; for, in short, is it incomprehensible to judge that the will, in order to determine in favour of one object rather than another, has occasion for no other knowledge but what is given by the understanding, with respect to the nature of the object to which it is inclined? What other motive is wanting to the will, unless what it derives from itself, and by its own proper motion, which actually inclines to one object rather than to another; and which, in circumstances exactly similar, will, at another time, perhaps incline to the second in preference to the first?

415.
Free-will may
pursue different
resolutions in
similar circum-
stances.

Some persons assert that the circumstances cannot be similar, if the will does not follow the same determination; for, in similar circumstances, why should it not make the same choice? The answer is obvious—Because it is free, and that, by the exercise of its freedom, it makes the difference of circumstances; which, at the same time, in fact, supposes or occasions a difference of circumstances in the understanding; for such is the imperious ascendant of free-will, that, in applying the understanding itself to the object to which it is determined, it makes it perceive qualities which it would not perhaps discover without it, or that are not perhaps really in it: but this view of the understanding is no more

more than a concomitant of the will, as hath been observed; and does not constitute a prior motive, independent of the free and actual motion of the will, which is determined by its own mere voluntary choice: such a prior motive would be a perfect chimera, or a real destruction of liberty.

And indeed this motive, independent of the exercise itself of liberty, or of the free determination of the will, must be such that the will might be able to resist it, or not: if it should not have power to resist it, from that very circumstance liberty would be destroyed, as the will should necessarily find itself subject to something that would not be its free exercise: should it be able to resist it, it would not of course be determined to follow it. Let me then ask, What would determine it, unless itself by its own voluntary choice and peculiar motion? There is then the same difficulty, as to the determination of the will, with respect to the motive, either in following or not following it, as there is with regard to the object, in being inclined or not inclined to it.

We must then acknowledge in free-will a power and capacity of inclining to one thing in preference to another, and of following or resisting a motive; and, provided the soul knows the object, the will finds of itself, and in itself,

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416.
Every motive,
independent of
the will, and
that should de-
termine it,
would destroy
liberty.

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independently of every prior act of the understanding, sufficient to determine it, and to form to itself its own peculiar and sole motive. To seek then, out of the will, any other thing as necessary to it, would be the same thing as to look for the exercise of liberty, where liberty is not to be found,

CHAPTER V.

Elucidation of a difficulty, with respect to liberty, that has exercised the minds of some eminent philosophers.

417.
Whether it be
for want of a
motive that a
man of sense
cannot act fool-
ishly.

IT does not appear to me that there is any thing to engage our further attention on the subject of the preceding chapter, unless it be the question that is asked, Why a man of sense cannot be determined to commit an unbecoming action, such as it would be in a magistrate to act the part of a mountebank publicly? The most plausible reason that has been given for this moral impossibility, is, that the man of sense would then have no motive by which he could be determined; whereas, if the will finds its motive in itself, it cannot want it on the occasion in question, no more than on any other: so that one
of

of these two things must necessarily follow; either the man of sense may actually play the mountebank publicly, which can never be, as we cannot suppose such a thing; or it will be a moral impossibility for him to play the mountebank, which appears false, as it is very freely, and by his own voluntary choice, that he resolves to refrain from acting such a part, and that he neither wants limbs nor strength for playing the mountebank in public, or wherever he likes.

This difficulty, which has been considered two different ways by two of the greatest men of the present century, is the more worthy of attention, as, notwithstanding all that has been said by them, there still seems to remain something on the subject that requires explanation.

They both allow, that it is *morally impossible* for the man of sense to play the part of a mountebank; but one pretends that the moral impossibility is no more than a very great difficulty, and that it is sometimes compatible with a contrary act: hence it would follow, that a man of sense might, at least sometimes, though very rarely, act the part of a mountebank publicly, and be supposed, in fact, to do so. The other insists, on the contrary, that the moral impossibility is incompatible with a contrary act, as the impossibility arises from the defect of a motive or cause; and a man of sense can have no motive

413.
The man of sense is, in that respect, subject to a moral impossibility.

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419.
The man of
sense may com-
mit an act of
folly, and yet
cannot be sup-
posed to com-
mit it.

tive to act the part of a mountebank. Whatever may be in these difficulties, I think they may be easily explained.

The man of sense in question can act the mountebank in public, but he cannot be supposed to do so. Whence arises this mystery, which includes both the power of acting, and the impossibility of a supposition of the act? From this—If we suppose a man of sense to act in such a manner but for once, the supposition destroys itself, and is in itself contradictory; for, to suppose a man of sense to act the part of a mountebank in public, is to suppose a man of sense a fool, and who must, under such a supposition, cease to have sense.—In this the whole mystery consists. This impossibility therefore, to speak with precision, neither arises from the moral impossibility, which, according to the general opinion of mankind, is no more than a very great difficulty, absolutely compatible with a contrary act, and even with the supposition of the contrary act; nor precisely from a want of motive; as the will, in order to act freely, derives, at least sometimes, its motive only from itself, being set in motion by itself, and active of itself: but the impossibility, as may be seen, solely arises from the supposition that destroys itself, by uniting at the same time, in one person, a man of sense, that is, a man who will not
act

act foolishly, and one who is not a man of sense, or one who will act foolishly.

CHAP. V.

If we do not take the term *man of sense* in the strict meaning of a prudent, wise, and discreet man, but in the vulgar acceptation, in which we only mean *a man who has hitherto acted consistently, or has behaved so in general through life*; in that case, there will be no impossibility for such a *man of sense* to commit an act of folly; there will be only a very great difficulty: so that it will be very possible, and we may even suppose a man of sense capable of committing some act of folly; as all ages have furnished examples of a similar nature.

420.

He may commit a foolish act, as he may, on some occasion, cease to be prudent.

It is on this very account, that a *man of sense* or *wisdom*, considered even as to the precision of *actual sense* or *wisdom*, though it be actually impossible for him to act foolishly, he is nevertheless at full liberty to avoid it, notwithstanding this impossibility; for if, by being supposed actually wise and prudent, he cannot be supposed to commit an act of folly, by which he would cease to be actually wise and prudent, he may, at least, cease to be actually wise, and be supposed to commit an act of folly: in short, he exercises his liberty in resolving to be prudent. Now, to resolve with liberty to be actually prudent, is actually to resolve with liberty to avoid all folly and extravagance: he is then free in refrain-

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refraining from an act of folly; and yet he cannot commit one, while he is supposed actually wise and prudent, as that would be to suppose him both wise and not wise at the same time: but this does not at all affect what I have endeavoured to prove here; which is, that free-will, in order to be determined, has no need of any other motive but itself, nor of any other act of the understanding, but that which presents to the will what the object is in itself to which the will inclines, and which it actually makes a *good*, with respect to itself, by the very act of inclining to it.

421.
Whether the
will can incline
to evil, consider-
ing it as such.

From the manner in which this subject has been explained, the question agitated in the schools must appear singular: it is, *whether the will can incline to evil, considering it as such*; for, as every object to which it inclines is a *good*, with respect to it, at the moment the will inclines to it, and that it cannot be an evil, being supposed a *good*, it is the same thing as asking, whether the will may incline to an object to which it cannot incline; for the moment the will is considered as inclining to it, it is then actually supposed a *good*, and cannot be supposed an evil.

CHAPTER VI.

Whether the human soul, or mind, always thinks.

IN order to resume and conclude what relates to the faculties of the soul, it will be necessary to say a few words with regard to the continuance of its exercise in its primary faculty, which is that of thinking. Des Cartes has declared that the soul always thinks, and that its essence even consists in this actual exercise: but it does not appear that he had any invincible testimony of the matter.

This, in fact, is a point which the experience of every moment of our lives should testify and confirm; but it is evident we have no such experience. We cannot recollect what passed within us during the time of a profound sleep, or while we were shut up in the womb of our mother. We have it not therefore in our power to convince ourselves that we exercised our thoughts during those times.

Some people say, that, as the soul is always united to the body, it cannot, at least, be without the sentiment or perception of this body,

422.
Experience does not inform us whether the soul always thinks.

423.
The impression of the sensation of the soul on the body is not evidently continual.

and

PART III.

and without the impression of sensation which the body makes upon the soul, since it is in this very thing that our life and the union of our bodies and souls appear to consist. But, however plausible this objection may be, it is not evident that life, and the union of our bodies with our souls, consist in this actual impression of sensation: it is true we cannot advance a contrary opinion of greater certainty, according to our natural ideas; but neither opinion is sufficiently certain to oblige us to embrace one side or the other; and this suspension of the judgment, in matters that are not clear, and with regard to which there is no immediate necessity for our being determined, is the best method that a judicious mind can possibly follow. It is from this consideration that the preceding chapter is added.

CHAP.

CHAPTER VII.

Of what is naturally unknown to us, with regard to the other properties of the soul; and how irrational it is to be determined in any opinion concerning them.

IT has been already observed, that nothing gives a more prejudicial turn to the mind, than to suffer it to form determinate opinions on matters of which it has no idea; because we thereby contract a habit of seeing things that have no existence but in our imagination, and of taking an obscure thought for a real truth. This is what has happened to all those who, in attempting to explain the nature of the faculties and operations of the soul, have advanced more than is known of those things, either from experience, or from any arguments deduced from experience.

It can be of no use therefore, as hath been observed, to enquire into the nature of the union of the soul and body; neither is it of more advantage to investigate what constitutes the memory and dispositions of the soul: all that some late philosophers have advanced on the subject is

424.
We cannot speak of the faculties of the soul but from experience.

425.
Some late philosophers have raised new difficulties on this subject.

PART III.

nothing but the idle suggestions of wanton imagination. After giving the most ingenious and eloquent description of the lines in the brain, that are formed and sunk deeper by the course of the animal spirits, and repeated again by a new course of the spirits in the same channel, have they furnished us with any real information, or thrown any new light upon these matters? They have raised a thousand new difficulties for one that appeared before, and added much greater obscurity, if possible, to what had been already impenetrable: they have done much worse therefore than the ancient philosophers did with their terms and *occult qualities*; for the latter, at least, only made use of words that conveyed no idea, and, as they were rarely meant to express any thing but matters unintelligible, might therefore be of use in bringing men to a speedy decision: but Des Cartes and his followers have given us imaginary notions for proofs, and supposed facts for absolute certainties; and upon their assertions some people have endeavoured to realise those traces in the brain, and flowings of the animal spirits, under the pretext that nothing better had been said: something better however might have been done, and that is, to have said nothing at all about matters of which we can know nothing, and thereby have avoided adding

adding perplexing difficulties to the mortification of conscious ignorance and incapacity.

CHAP. VII.

How are formed those lines which some persons would fain have to constitute the exercise of the memory? What space do they occupy to retain such numerous and various ideas? How is it that they are not mutually confounded in their numberless intersections? What order do they observe, in order to follow each other in such exact succession, as may be seen in a discourse of several hours repeated from memory? What relation moreover have these lines with the ideas they renew? Is not each of those articles as incomprehensible in itself as even the memory? Why will any one then adduce, as an explanation, what is no less impenetrable than the thing explained? That the memory exists, we cannot doubt; let us seek no further; we can know nothing more on that head: it is the same with respect to what follows.

426.
The traces, or lines in the brain, do not explain the exercise of the memory.

How came we to have ideas, and in what manner are they produced in us? Are they derived from external objects, or from the nature itself of the soul; or are they, in fine, in us in such a manner as to arise likewise in part from things distinct from us? Let us hear what men of the most exalted genius have been led to say on this subject from the too eager desire of speaking, without sufficiently understanding what

427.
Imaginary notions of philosophers with respect to the origin of our ideas.

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they said; it will be enough to deter us from following their example. Some have imagined that ideas are produced by external objects; that they are *impressed species*, which, by the channel of the senses, are conveyed to the understanding; that this considers and spiritualises them; and thence forms an *express species*, which is the operation itself of the mind. What instruction can we derive from this explanation? What light does it throw on the subject of ideas? The following will prove as little satisfactory.

428.
The creation of ideas more incomprehensible than what is attempted to be explained.

It is, that God creates ideas on every occasion where they are necessary for thinking. The explanation is short; *a creation of ideas*: all the inconvenience attending it is, that the nature of our ideas is precisely what we are looking for; that we are not here told what it is; and that this creation, whatever it may be, is still more above the reach of our understanding than even the nature itself of our ideas.

429.
Having our ideas in God, and seeing all in God; an abyss of difficulties.

Another advances, as a matter very easily comprehended, that the ideas of all we see are in God; that our mind or soul is immediately united to God; so that it immediately sees the substance of God, which contains all that we know, or can know. I leave it to those who have leisure and inclination to examine scrupulously each of the words of this explanation; every one of which, if I am not mistaken, would furnish mat-

ter of controversy sufficient to fill large volumes. I would ask whether my idea, which experience makes me feel within me, and which, according to this author, is likewise in the substance of God—whether it be, I say, in the substance of God, and in the substance of my soul, in such a manner as to make these two substances but one; or, if they be two, how is my idea present to my mind, when it is in the substance of God, which is not the substance of my mind? Again, I ask, what it is to see God immediately; and whether it is to see him by an intuitive and beatific vision? I shall not examine in what manner we can see God immediately, and yet, in a particular idea, see but a part of what is in God; and, as our ideas are limited, how we can find their limits in God, who is boundless; or, if our ideas be not limited in God, whom we see immediately, how came they to be so in what we really see. Here is ample matter for arguments which I have no curiosity to investigate: one thing I have long wished to know, and that is, whether the author of those remarks seriously imagined he had said any thing to illustrate the nature of our ideas beyond what had been advanced by others on this subject, which was always involved in great obscurity.

When therefore, by way of explaining the nature of ideas, it is said that we see our ideas

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430.
The explanation
more obscure
than the thing
to be explained.

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in God, I would beg to have this explanation explained, and to be informed of what is understood by *seeing our ideas in God*; for I protest before all the philosophers in the world, that I am, for my own part, more puzzled to conceive how I see my ideas in God, than to comprehend the nature and origin itself of my ideas. It is in vain to exhort me to reflect within myself, to consider my own nature with closer attention, and to consult the universal being: it is, because I have long communed with myself on this article, from a long and serious meditation on myself, and from having long consulted Reason, which is the only universal being to consult upon such an occasion, that I conclude, from these reflections and contemplations, either my adversary or I must be somewhat visionary in our notions; which of us it is, must be determined by the general opinion of mankind, as the question is concerning a first truth.

CHAPTER VIII.

What can be said, that is intelligible, with respect to ideas.

IF we confine ourselves to observations on ideas that are intelligible, we will say they are nothing but mere modifications of the soul, inasmuch as it thinks; they are called *ideas* with respect to the object represented, and *perception* with regard to the faculty representing: this however does not relate to a *representation* that recalls to the mind any corporeal object. I call *representation* the interior object which the soul has present to itself in each of its perceptions, and by which it intimately and clearly distinguishes one from the other. It is manifest that our ideas, considered in this sense, are not more distinguished from our understanding than motion is from a body moved. The objections made, with regard to the latter explanation, contain nothing that can raise a doubt in a rational mind.

It will be said, it is the mind that receives the ideas, and they become present to it; and therefore it may be asked whether the faculty

431.
In what idea
differs from
perception.

432.
Ideas differ from
the soul as a mo-
dification does
from its sub-
stance.

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that receives be not different from the idea which is received and becomes present to it? To this we answer, that it differs from it as the substance does from its modification; for our mind is nothing but the substance of the soul, inasmuch as it comprehends; and our idea is no more than the modification of our mind, which forms and receives it within itself.

433:
Objection made
by Le Clerc.

Le Clerc advances another objection, which he seems to think more important, and which is perhaps less so. If our ideas, says he, were but the perceptions of the soul, we should not distinguish the perception of a sensation that is solely in us, as pain, which is produced by the prick of a pin, from the perception of an object that is entirely out of us, as the perception of the pin itself which is not in us. I do not well comprehend the objection of Mr. Le Clerc, nor what he means by the perception of the pin; the soul perceives a sentiment, or a thought, and not the pin: but, in short, what difficulty is there in conceiving that, among our perceptions, some make us sensible of what is within us, and others of what is distinct from us? Will either one or the other be thereby more or less modifications of the soul? When Mr. Le Clerc gives a clear answer to the comparison, I shall bestow more time in refuting him; but I foresee he will spare me that trouble.

C H A P.

CHAPTER IX.

Of the origin, duration, and immortality of the soul.

PHILOSOPHY, strictly speaking, affords us no lights as to the origin of the soul: after exhausting all its powers and knowledge in the pursuit, it only finds that it cannot perceive any necessary connection between a spiritual and a material substance; therefore it cannot discern that the soul derives any part of its origin from matter or bodily substance.

434.
The soul does not derive its origin from the body,

We cannot more clearly see how one soul should produce another; therefore nothing is more plausible on the subject, than to say that our souls derive their origin from God: and what we are taught by faith of the matter should not be too hastily rejected by human reason, as the assistance of faith gives considerable strength to the powers of reason and the arguments of philosophy.

435.
nor from another soul.

And indeed, if we mean to speak with candour, what invincible answer, without the light of faith, could be given to an obstinate and vain man, who, because there is a relation between
the

436.
The incomprehensible relation between the soul and the body.

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the soul and the body in their operations, though it be incomprehensible to us, should therefore maintain that it is not impossible but there may be a relation as to substance between them, though we may not conceive any such thing? I answer, that I admit the first, because experience convinces me of it; and that I have a right not to allow the second, of which I have no experience: but he may quickly reply, that the question does not relate to a matter of fact, but to a possibility, or at least a non-impossibility; and, as experience convinces me of the non-impossibility of the relation between the operations of the body and soul, which I do not comprehend, it should likewise restrain me from pronouncing with regard to the impossibility of the relation, as to substance, which God might have formed between the soul and body: but, notwithstanding these arguments, moral proofs on the occasion supply the place of physical evidence, in such a manner as to carry conviction, with respect to the spirituality and immortality of the soul, which are privileges that have an intimate relation with each other.

437.
We see no principle of destruction in the soul.

Physical proofs of the immortality of the soul are deduced from this consideration, that, with all our powers of knowledge and reason, we can discover no subject or principle of destruction in it: for, in short, we know of no destruction but what

what is occasioned by a change or separation in the parts of a whole: now we not only do not discern any parts in the soul; but farther, we positively see that it is a substance perfectly one, which has no parts.

We have observed, in speaking of unity, that it is a quality not strictly applicable to a body; that whatever is body is not said to be *one*, but in an arbitrary respect; and it is in such a manner one, that, at bottom, it is no more than a collection of several unities, each of which cannot properly be called *one*. Let us take a watch, for example: we cannot see any thing in the body that has more unity; for, if the least of its parts happens to be wanting, it is no longer a watch, properly speaking: yet what is this unity, but a collection of distinct things and parts? Touch the pendulum, and you do not touch the wheel: had they sentiment, or feeling, the pendulum might be sensible of pain, or be unhappy, whilst the wheel should enjoy pleasure, and be happy, without either feeling what the other did.

It is not the same with regard to the soul, which is so far *one* that I cannot make impressions on what I might imagine to be one of its parts, without making impression on what I should fancy to be another part of its substance; or, to speak more justly, an impression cannot be made on its substance, without being made on the whole

CHAP. IX.

438.
Bodies have no
unity, nor sim-
plicity,

439.
as a mind has.

of

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of its substance. I see a pleasing prospect, and hear a fine concert: these two sentiments cannot be supposed to reside in two parts of the soul: they must be equally in the whole soul; for, were we to suppose two parts in it, one would not be the other; and the part that should hear the concert, would have no sensation of the pleasure of the prospect; for one, in not being the other, would not be susceptible of the properties of the other, as has been observed with respect to a watch: I may impress a colour on the wheels, that shall not affect the pendulum. In the soul, on the contrary, one part must necessarily be the other; and, to speak more properly, the soul must have no parts; for, while we suppose parts in it, whatever makes impression on one part of the soul, necessarily makes impression on the whole soul together.

440.
Nothing passes
in the soul with-
out affecting
the whole of
what it is.

The soul is so sensible of this, that it judges of, and compares all that passes within it, when it experiences different sentiments. In order to judge, therefore, that one is painful, and the other agreeable, a substance that is single, and without parts, must feel both: were there two parts, one would judge of what it should feel on one side, and the other of what it might particularly experience on the other side. It might be compared to a piece of timber, one end of which might be burned, and the other not in the least injured

injured by fire: it would be, as it were, two souls, one of which might feel joy without the other having any share in it, and without either of them having the power to form a comparison or judgement with respect to two different sentiments. It is this comparison, and this judgement, formed by the soul, which demonstrate it to be *one* and *simple*, without parts and composition. Now composition and parts being the only cause of destruction we know, as hath been already observed, and as it is universally allowed, we do not consequently see any principle of destruction in souls; and we have no room to judge that they are liable to perish, or be destroyed.

But might they not have a principle of destruction unknown to us, as they have a principle of formation of which we are entirely ignorant? Cannot God himself, their first author, annihilate them? May he not have formed them to return to the same nothing whence he had drawn them? This is the utmost extent to which the arguments of presumption and libertinism can be carried. We shall not hesitate to acknowledge, that faith, with respect to the immortality of the soul, gives us much more positive assurances than human reason is capable of suggesting; but, if we confine ourselves to reason alone, we still have far the advantage of our opponents. What they alledge is true, that we are not acquainted with
all

441.
What we know
of the soul shows
it to be immortal.

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all the internal nature of the soul: but what we do not know, is, with respect to our reason, as if it had no existence; nor can we thence draw any conclusion: it is from what we do know, that consequences are to be drawn. Now we evidently know, that the soul shows no principle of what we call destruction; and we evidently know, therefore, that it is unreasonable to judge it mortal. But might not God annihilate it? Undoubtedly he might: this is what every body must allow; but it is not the affair in question: it is, whether he actually destined it to be reduced hereafter to nothing, as he has thence formed it? This, as hath been observed, is a conjecture that we cannot rationally listen to, if we examine the physical proofs alone that are deduced from the nature and constitution of the soul; but the suspicion will entirely vanish, if we take the trouble to compare it with the natural disposition of the mind and heart of man; and here moral proofs may be very properly introduced.

442.
Desire, a moral
proof of our
immortality.

The desire of being happy is what we find most deeply rooted in the heart, and most strongly interwoven with the whole nature of man. The author of Nature himself, therefore, has imprinted in us this desire, and all that is united with it, to give us a relish for virtue, which leads us to esteem the disposition of being regular in ourselves, and benevolent with regard to others.

Is

Is it probable that God, infinite in wisdom and goodness as he is, could have formed us for an end which we should never reach? Such an idea is incomprehensible: it is however certain, that we do not in this life attain to perfect happiness, to which we are continually aspiring; and, were our souls to be mortal, and perish with our bodies, we could never attain it.

Besides, the means which we evidently conceive to have an essential relation to happiness, such as wisdom, virtue, equity, and goodness, would have but an equivocal and false relation to that happiness to which we feel ourselves destined, as God often permits those virtues to be opposed, mortified, and despised, in this life. Again, though they should meet with every advantage in this world, I still find in me a desire of extending my existence beyond this mortal life: this desire is so conformable to reason, that it never is extinguished, unless by a kind of intoxication and stupefaction of our rational faculties. If my soul be then mortal, the most rational desire I have will never be accomplished: now this desire is imprinted on my heart by the author of my existence, who thereby indicates my future destiny: God would therefore have placed in me a desire, that must only tend to give me pain and regret; he would have placed in me a false indication of my destiny, and deceived me in the most

443.
As it is placed
in us by provi-
dence."

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most essential article of my life; which is inconsistent with the truth, wisdom, and purity, of God. We cannot therefore conceive the existence of a good and wise God, who is our author, without conceiving at the same time that our souls must exist after this life, in order to arrive at that happiness with the desire of which he has inspired us; for it is certain we do not fully possess it in this life, even by wisdom and virtue, that should lead us to it. In a word, if the soul were mortal, God would not have acted with the wisdom and equity that are essential to his nature, and without which God would not be what he really is: the existence of God, therefore, is a proof of the duration of our souls after this life.

Let us here take a short view of those invincible proofs that may be adduced of the existence of the first being: this is an article essential to our subject, as it is thence we are to be furnished with the knowledge of all that our souls, and all spiritual beings possible, are in their first and true source, which is the supreme and eternal being.

CHAPTER X.

*Of the first principle of our soul, of all that God is,
and of his existence.*

WE have shewn (N^o. 288) that wherever order is discovered, there also must be found some intelligence who is the author of it. Now there is order, such as might be different from what it is, in the general structure of the universe, and in that particular formation we call the nature of man. There is then an intelligence that is the cause of this order: this intelligent cause, superior to the whole universe, and to every man, and who made them what they are, is what I call *God*. A God therefore exists.

If this proof, simple as it is, be not admitted, I do not think it worth while to reason on the present subject; for, in short, in order to reason, we must necessarily have a first principle, that is, a proposition allowed to be indisputable, and that is, as has been remarked (N^o. 29) so clear, that it can neither be attacked nor proved by any proposition of greater perspicuity. Now there is not one that more fully possesses this character than the following principle; *all that I see, in*

Y

which

444.
The order of
the world, a
proof of the
existence of
God.

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which is found order, and a permanent, uniform, and constant order, must have an intelligence for its cause: for, between a man who should judge a watch, that regularly marks the hours, might have existed of itself, and another who denies that two and two make four, I see no difference as to their absurdity and extravagance; nor do I imagine that any person can seriously find a distinction.

445.
The laws of
motion depend
on God.

If it be pretended that, as the laws of motion are necessary in nature, the order that actually subsists must have thence necessarily ensued; in answer to this, I say, that the actual laws of motion in nature are not necessarily produced but by the will of an intelligent cause; for, without this, as matter is in itself indifferent to all degrees and directions of motion, how could it have been determined to any motion?

446.
The author of
the perfections
of the world
possesses them
within himself.

Again, if the universe in general, and man in particular, have a superior intelligence for their author; as the order found in them is equally admirable, estimable, good, and useful, their author must have something in him more admirable, estimable, and superior to them; for an artificer is always to be esteemed superior to his work, and a cause to its effects. Now, as the work and effect surpass all that we conceive most estimable, admirable, and best, he who is the maker and cause, is of consequence incomparably more so, and is found from his nature superior

rior to that we can conceive or express of him. This is the idea we have when we call God an *infinite being*; that is, we do not perceive the extent of his attributes, nor can we even conjecture any method of discovering them.

This cause of all things being also the first of which we have a knowledge, we can neither ascertain, determine, nor even suspect its limits by any rule: we manifestly see that it has more perfections to conciliate our esteem, our admiration, and love, than all that we know or can know; but beyond that, how far this cause extends in virtue, efficacy, and merit, is what we can no way determine; and should we attempt to fix any particular degree or measure to it, in preference to others, it is evident that it must be from mere fancy and idle conjecture: it is therefore from the suggestions of Reason that we admit no bounds to it. But who has informed us that there are not several causes of what we see in the universe in general, and in man in particular? Who has told us, if they have but one cause, that this itself has not another cause, the latter a third, the third a fourth, and so on *ad infinitum*?

To suspect several causes of the universe, must proceed from the fanciful notions already mentioned, that are manifestly contrary to reason; and would be to admit what is more difficult to

447.
We cannot see
any bounds in
him,

448.
We cannot su-
spect the world
to have several
causes, or au-
thors,

PART III.

conceive, and reject what is less so. A whole, such as the universe, of which man forms a part, and of which the parts most deserving our attention have so astonishing a relation with each other, may, and must more easily, proceed from one intelligence only than from many, who could never combine their designs so perfectly as one can regulate and combine his. And indeed it cannot enter the mind to imagine several different causes of the universe, without supposing them subordinate to one another; to do which is, to protract, or augment, instead of solving the difficulty.

449.
though they
should even be
subordinate
causes.

For, in short, those subordinate causes will either have a first cause, or not: if they have one, it is that we are in search of, and what must be the principle of all that exists: if they have no principle, they do not exist; for, being all subordinate causes, they cannot exist but by subordination to some first principle, otherwise some one of them would no longer be subordinate, which is contrary to the supposition.

But, by admitting an infinity of causes, each effect, it is said, would always have a prior cause, and no cause could be adduced but what must have one anterior. To talk after this manner, is to make use of words without saying any thing that the mind conceives, or whence any idea can be formed.

And

And indeed, in the infinite succession of all those causes that have hitherto existed, not one would exist of itself, and consequently none at all would exist; for they would neither have within themselves, nor externally, any principle to determine their existence. They would have none internally, as none of them have a principle of existence in themselves; nor would they have any externally, as nothing remains independent of such an infinite succession. If it be said that each cause would exist by its anterior cause, this is directly throwing the same difficulty on that anterior cause: for I would ask, who or what has determined the anterior cause to exist? Now, removing from cause to cause, instead of eluding the difficulty, would only serve to protract it by an imaginary infinity, in which we always find an effect without a cause, and a determination without a determining principle; so that I am as much at a loss to conceive who or what has determined the anterior, as the posterior cause. Thus, upon seeing the end of a chain suspended, the top of which should be entirely out of sight, were I to be asked what cause suspended this chain, and I should answer, the cause is, that all the links mutually depend on each other; my reply would excite laughter, and justly, as the difficulty would still be the same, and it might be asked, on what

^{450.}
In an infinity
of subordinate
causes none
will exist.

PART III.

depends the infinite length of the chain composed of all the links, not one of which is suspended by itself? This chain, infinite as it might be, would still be no more than a collection of links, not one of which can remain suspended of itself. The succession of links could not therefore remain suspended, unless by the help of some external cause, and there is no such external cause; for, if the links hang upon one another, and their infinite succession depends upon nothing, that is saying, they hang, and do not hang; that they are suspended, according to the supposition, but not really so, as the infinite succession of links is not itself suspended.

451.
An eternal being must be admitted,

When we therefore refer the principle of the universe to an infinite chain of causes, we admit an infinite series of things incomprehensible and contradictory. It is then true, that the eternity of a First Being, which is infinity with regard to duration, cannot be fully comprehended in all respects; but all may and should comprehend that there has existed some being from eternity. If we really suppose no eternity, this supposition will be still more incomprehensible. A being must have commenced without any principle of existence, either in itself or externally; and this would be a first effect without a cause. It is then the nature of man to be obliged by his reason to admit the existence of something he

does

does not comprehend ; he clearly conceives the necessity of this external existence ; but he neither comprehends the nature of this being existing eternally, nor the nature of his eternity : he comprehends that *such a thing is*, and not what it is.

This last reflection is a full solution of a number of ridiculous difficulties with which the human mind perplexes itself : its nature is, to know the existence of certain things, without being acquainted with their properties ; and would it renounce the knowledge of the existence, because it is incapable of knowing its properties ? This is the same thing as if a person should refuse to be convinced that he remembers and thinks, because he cannot explain to his satisfaction in what manner he remembers and thinks. The *manner* eludes our researches ; let us give it up : we suffer ourselves to be perplexed with this, because we have no idea of it : and yet this very circumstance should free our minds from all perplexity ; for any particular matter, of which we have no idea, is, and ought to be, with respect to our reason and arguments, as if it did not really exist : now, what does not exist, we have no right to judge of, nor to form thence any conclusions contrary to those things we know to exist. A deficiency of knowledge, or a thing unknown, never destroys nor makes any altera-

PART III.

tion in real knowledge, or a thing known. We know not in what manner the First Being exists; we nevertheless know that he does exist: we do not comprehend the measure of his eternity; we however conceive its reality and necessity: we do not conceive in what manner he has produced all things; but we very well conceive that he must have produced them: in fine, we have not an idea of all that the Supreme Author of our understanding, and of the whole universe, is in himself; but we have a very clear idea that it is impossible but he must possess, in a superlative degree, both intelligence, and all the qualities that deserve our admiration, esteem, and love, in all that he is.

452.
God is not incomprehensible to us in all things.

It is therefore a duty essential in metaphysics, to clearly explain what is advanced when mention is made of an incomprehensible object, such as God; for he is not, in fact, incomprehensible in all things, with regard to us: if that were the case, we should have no idea of him, and have nothing to say of him; but we may and ought to affirm of God, that he exists, that he has understanding, wisdom, power, and strength, as he hath communicated part of those qualities to his works; and we should also assert, that he possesses these attributes in a degree superior to our highest conceptions: 1st, Because he has them from his nature and the necessity of his being,
and

and neither borrowed nor communicated. 2dly, As having them all together, and united in one simple and indivisible being, and not in parts, nor dispersed, as they are in creatures. 3dly, In fine, because he has them as it were in their source; and we, on the contrary, have them in small streams, and like drops flowing from his infinite, eternal, and ineffable being. But as, between this supreme and universal intelligence, which is the cause of all things, and the limited and particular intelligence we call *our soul*, the distance must be immense, is there not some other intelligence of a middle nature? This is an opinion taught by faith, and readily admitted by philosophy. It will not be improper to enquire a little more particularly into *the suggestions of reason alone on this matter*: it shall therefore form the subject of the next chapter.

PART III.

CHAPTER XI.

Of middle intelligences between God and the human soul, or of pure spiritual beings.

453.
What is meant
by spiritual be-
ings.

WE should be first agreed as to the idea we affix to the terms *middle intelligences*, or rather to the word *spirits*, which is more convenient, as being shorter. I understand thereby spiritual substances, that is, such as are capable of thinking and desiring, without being attached to bodies like ours.

454.
There is no ne-
cessary connec-
tion between
the soul and
the body.

I say to bodies such as ours, in order to shew that we may conceive intelligences without any body, or with bodies different from ours; for, in short, as we can perceive no necessary connexion between the substance of our souls and the substance of our bodies, we may also judge that a spiritual substance might exist without any body; but perceiving, on the other hand, from experience, that our souls are united to our bodies, there appears no difficulty in supposing a mind of superior intelligence to be attached to a body in the same proportion as our bodies are to our souls.

In

In this respect, I say, we see no difficulty in admitting *spirits*, or a *middle order of intelligences*; and so we learn from Revelation, that there are spirits called *angels*, or *demons*: but we have nothing to do with Revelation at present; the question relates only to the mere light of Nature, and to know, supposing Reason to subsist without Revelation, whether we should admit *spirits*. All the answer I can give is, to confess my ignorance of the matter. We might admit them, it is true; but should we be obliged to admit them? No: but Plato, it will be said, by the mere light of Nature, thought himself obliged to admit them. There is some reason to conjecture that he might have formed that opinion, as well as several others, from the confused knowledge he had of the mysteries of the people of God, through his intercourse with the Egyptians, among whom the Israelites had resided above two hundred years, and to whom they had communicated many ideas which the human mind could not have probably acquired by the light of Nature alone. I know, however, that Plato has founded his opinion on a particular argument; but it does not appear to me sufficiently convincing to be relished by every body. It is as follows:

We see substances that are mere bodies; we see substances, such as those of men, which are at the same time spirits and bodies: there must be there-

CHAP. XL.

455.
Reason alone
would not in-
vincibly prove
the existence
of pure spirits:

456.
The reasoning
of Plato on this
subject, not suf-
ficiently convin-
cing.

PART III.

therefore substances that are pure spirits. If I deny the consequence, how will Plato, or his followers, be able to prove it? This must be enquired into: in the mean time, I consider the consequence as not proved, as I cannot of myself discern how it should be.

457.
Experience is
not more satis-
factory as to
this matter.

We do not perceive that experience, the chief guide of human reason, could have ever obliged us to admit spirits of a middle nature; yet it is experience itself that is quoted with regard to many facts that are asserted. Ghosts and apparitions, predictions of soothsayers, answers of oracles, and miracles wrought by magicians, are, at different times, appealed to; but in all these nothing is invincibly shewn but marvellous events, and not substances of a middle nature between God and Man. These effects therefore might be attributed, either to imposture, to extraordinary powers of Nature, or, more rationally still, to the Author himself of Nature, if the particular miracle in question is a good, or tends to good; so that we are not thence obliged to admit a middle order of spirits. Now, even when Revelation expressly informs us of the existence and operation of good and evil spirits, although we cannot deny some of their effects, it is however certain that the seduction in this respect is sometimes very great. Besides, with all the attention I have employed, in order to
con-

convince myself of what I could see or hear relative to the matter, I think I have never seen or heard any thing that should engage a mind, rationally scrupulous, to judge, from the mere lights of nature, and independently of revealed facts, that any spirit, or middle intelligence, has been clearly manifested.

What are we then to say of the particulars of their nature and operations? What are we to judge of their manner of thinking, acting, desiring, speaking, and moving from one place to another? Nothing at all, as we know nothing of those things; but many treatises, many curious, profound, and learned books, have been composed on these matters: those writings and books may communicate things that are true, by relating all that we learn from faith on the subject; but as for the rest, that religion does not teach, those who say more of the matter than we, are not therefore better informed.

It may perhaps be asked, whether it is worth while to write a treatise on spiritual beings, when it ascertains nothing with regard to the most sublime and extensive subjects of common metaphysics? I say, in answer, that it is learning a great deal, to see distinctly we can acquire no knowledge of certain matters; and that all we might have learned of them may, or ought to be

458.
We know nothing of the particulars of the nature and operations of spirits.

PART III.

be forgotten, as incapable of giving satisfaction to a rational mind.

It is perhaps the most solid fruit of metaphysical knowledge, to make us fully sensible of the limits of our understanding, and of the vanity of so many ancient and modern philosophers, who have thought it better to use a language that is incomprehensible, than to repress the ridiculous ambition, and the dangerous vanity, of saying things that neither are, nor can be, understood by any person. For my own part, it has been my constant aim, throughout this whole treatise, to explain first truths, and the sources or principles of our opinions, in the clearest manner possible, in order to make them intelligible to the human mind. I have in every part endeavoured to avoid, or lay open the errors, into which the inferior ranks of men, and the ignorant, are apt to fall, for want of thinking; and many philosophers, by giving into the contrary extreme, and thinking too much. With this view I have been careful to admit, as notions, none but clear and precise ideas; and to acknowledge no principles, but the judgements adopted by common sense. I shall be guided by the same rule in the prosecution of what remains to be explained in the subsequent part of this treatise.

PART

P A R T IV.

First Truths that relate to Corporeal Beings.

[The first truths we can discover with regard to corporeal beings, relate either to what they appear to us to have in common with one another, or what they seem to have peculiar to themselves. The first is what we generally call the MATTER OF BODIES; the other is what is termed the FORM OF BODIES. They shall be made the subject of two distinct chapters.]

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PART IV.

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CHAPTER I.

Of the matter of bodies.

MANY define matter to be, *what is common to each thing with another*; and form, *what is peculiar in each thing, and distinguishes it from every other thing*. I should make no scruple of admitting these notions; but, in admitting them, I must also say, what will not be heard perhaps without some repugnance, that, even with respect to spiritual beings, there are both *matter* and *form*, as they have *something* in common, viz. *intelligence*, and something peculiar, that is, *what constitutes each of them such a spiritual being, and not another*.

If it be pretended that what is said to be common to spiritual beings, is no more, properly speaking, than a *resemblance*, I have no objection; but what is said to be common to different bodies is nothing but a *resemblance* also. No part of what a particular being really is, forms a part of another being; otherwise a being must be,

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at

459.

Matter is not what is common to many things.

460.

What is similar in different beings is not common to them.

PART IV.

at the same time, two beings; which is a thing incomprehensible.

461.
A substance
successively be-
comes several
bodies.

But what was *wheat*, is it not now *bread*; and will it not be to-morrow *blood*, and the day after *flesh*? And, in these four substances, is there not something common; so that what was the substance of one becomes, at least in part, the substance of the other? Yes, doubtless there is something common between these four substances; but what is found common is the same substance, which takes different names on account of its different modifications. We however find nothing actually common in different bodies, one of which is *wheat*, another *bread*, the third *blood*, and the fourth *flesh*. It seems then that matter should be defined, not *what is common to different bodies*, but *a substance that may successively become several different bodies*.

462.
It cannot be-
come several spi-
ritual beings.

By this definition, the idea of *matter* will be necessarily found to exclude spiritual beings; for we have no idea that a spiritual being can ever become, by the help of any modifications, either totally, or even in part, the substance of another spiritual being; whereas we have a very distinct idea, that a determinate portion of matter, which at this moment actually constitutes a particular body, may, by alterations of motion and figure, easily become a quite different body, as we see in the example already quoted of *wheat*,
that

that becomes *flour*, from flour *bread*, from bread *blood*, and from blood *flesh*; for we know, without a possibility of a doubt, that some part of the substance of the first passed successively to all the rest; and it is this substance we call *matter*.

In the substance common to different bodies that succeed each other, we perceive certain qualities, or modifications; such as, first, to be capable of motion; secondly, incapable of being naturally in the same place, or space, that is occupied by another body; and, thirdly, capable of occupying, in particular, and necessarily, a certain portion of space or extent. These three qualities are what we term, first, its *mobility*; secondly, its *impenetrability*; and, thirdly, its *quantity*.

All these things, or rather these qualities, are naturally, and according to the representation of our natural ideas, really inseparable from matter itself: as they however form objects of so many particular ideas, they may be considered one without the other; our minds having the faculty of attaching themselves to one of those ideas only, without considering another, and that by the help of abstraction, or abstracted ideas. We must, however, be extremely cautious of judging things to be really, and in themselves, such as we represent them to our imagination by abstractions; so as to judge absolutely inseparable, or separable,

463.
To be moveable, impenetrable, and capable of extension, are qualities of bodies;

464.
are inseparable from them, as they occur separately to our mind.

PART IV.

465.
The redness
in a burning
coal does not
constitute its
substance.

ble, in the substance, whatever we unite with, or separate from it, by the operation of our minds.

If a savage, for example, had never seen any but burning coals, and he had no idea of an extinguished coal, he would not conceive that a coal could remain what it is, in ceasing to be red, and becoming black; nevertheless he would be manifestly mistaken.

If, on the other hand, from seeing nothing more conspicuous and striking in the burning coal than the flaming colour, he should take it into his head that the essence of the coal solely consisted in being red, he would be still more grossly deceived; for it is as much the essence of the coal to be capable of becoming black, as to be actually red. It is true, according to the thought of the savage, the coal, in ceasing to be red, would cease to be what it was before: but it is in this very particular that he would be mistaken; for the coal would only lose one of its modifications, without losing its real substance. Let us apply this to the subject, in order to know the essence of matter.

466.
We have no ex-
perience of a
body without
quantity.

From never having seen, or had a sensation, or even any idea, of matter without quantity, if we should thence pretend to conclude, that the essence of matter is quantity, it would be like concluding that the essence of a burning coal consists in redness. We may indeed say, according

cording to the present state of things, and the idea we and all men have been able to acquire naturally, by means of sensation and experience, that we do not conceive it possible for matter to be without quantity; but we neither can, nor ought to conclude, that it is absolutely impossible for its substance to exist without it.

Again, as he who should see a burning coal, would be in the wrong to take its redness for its precise and total essence, as there are other qualities united with it as well as redness; for example, its susceptibility of inflammation, or extinction; so it would be likewise unreasonable, with respect to matter, to take one of its qualities for its precise and total essence, in preference to other qualities that are equally united with it; and to say that matter consists in its *mobility* rather than in its *quantity*, or in its *quantity* rather than in its *impenetrability* or *mobility*: for, in fact, it is advancing nothing, to pretend that the two last qualities are consequences of quantity. Another may alledge, that quantity is no more than a consequence of one of the two others: and neither of these two pretensions will be better founded, or more rational, than the other; for experience teaches us, that each of these three qualities forms three ideas in our minds, and that we can think of one without thinking of the two others; con-

467.
Quantity is not
more the essence
of bodies than
mobility.

PART IV.

sequently, that they are independent of each other in our minds.

468.

They are not
inseparable, but
according to the
order of nature.

That one is inseparable from the other in reality, and in their internal nature, we find to be conformable to natural order; but to know whether absolutely, and in a supernatural way, they may not be separable, is what neither our senses, ideas, nor minds, can reach; and, when we pronounce them inseparable, it should be understood according to the *order of nature*, of which alone we have experience and knowledge.

469.

We know not
the internal ef-
fence of matter.

Not only it is not rational, to assert that one of these three qualities is the essence of matter, preferably to the others; but it is equally wrong to say, that any of the three, or even the three together, are its effective and real essence. I say *effective* and *real*; for it may indeed be its *metaphysical* and *represented* essence, that is, what our minds and ideas represent to us as most conspicuous and striking in what we call *matter* or *body*. But, besides what is represented to us by our minds, there may be many other things that our minds do not represent, not having even an idea of them, which can be obtained only by our senses. Now experience daily shews us, in external objects, an infinite variety of dispositions that escape the sagacity and penetration of our senses; and these particularly constitute the internal substance and the effective nature of each thing,

thing, which are very different from the simple qualities that make impresson on our senses. If it be pretended, that, to make the essence of matter consist in quantity, is a primitive idea which nature has placed in us, independently of all experience and argument; it is this very *pretension* that is disputed, and that is considered no less frivolous by some, than it is deliberately admitted by others.

But to return to the example already adduced: the *burning coal*, considered as such, is evidently *red*; and it is equally evident that this redness is not the essence itself of the coal: it is a quality that resides in it; but it is not the subject and the nature itself of the substance in which it resides.

In order to be convinced of this, let us consider what is in itself this quality of redness in the coal; I say, in the coal, for I do not speak of this quality as producing in me a particular sensation by the organ of one of my senses. What is then the quality of redness in the coal? It is a modification of the substance of the coal, disposed in such manner as to reflect the rays of light, in a determinate quantity, calculated to produce in me a sensation of a red colour: it is therefore a disposition of the thing, but not the thing itself; or, if you will, it is the thing itself considered with respect to one of its parts or dis-

470.
The disposition
of a thing sup-
poses the thing
itself.

PART IV.

positions; but this disposition supposes the thing itself that is disposed. The disposition and particular contexture which constitute what we call *cloth*, considered absolutely as disposition, is not the substance itself of the cloth: this substance, in fact, is independent of such disposition, as it might be, and was, without that disposition, when the cloth was no more than wool. In fine, the qualities of a particular being are not the substance itself of that being, nor its real and internal nature, because those qualities are only what is perceptible in the being, with respect to us; and its substance moreover contains several internal dispositions, which we cannot know, because they are imperceptible to our senses; but they are, on that account, the more essential to it, as they more particularly constitute the internal nature of its substance.

471.
Extension is not
the essence of
matter.

The three foregoing reflections furnish three arguments to shew the little foundation there is for the opinion of those who consider extension as the essence of matter: they have been looked upon as men of the greatest sagacity; yet, with all their penetration, they did not perceive that on this occasion they took, 1st. A part of what they discerned in matter for the whole of its internal nature; 2dly, A particular quality of matter for all its other qualities; 3dly, Abstracted ideas of matter for its real nature. Matter is a thing

thing extensive, as snow is a thing white; but CHAP. I.
neither whiteness constitutes the nature of snow,
nor extension the essence of matter.

In reflecting on so glaring an error, we cannot but wonder how it came to be so firmly established, and so widely diffused. This was probably occasioned by the circumstance following.

When Des Cartes made his appearance, Philosophy, in a multiplicity of pompous words, said many things that were not very intelligible: this he and his followers easily and successfully demonstrated. People therefore concluded, that, as they were right with respect to what they refuted, they must have been equally so in what they established; and hence proceeded the mistake. They threw a ridicule on ancient philosophy, which laid down abstractions instead of realities: the followers of Des Cartes substituted other abstractions, which are not greater realities.

472.
In refuting one false notion, others are established that are not more true.

But to return to the subject: What are we then to think with respect to matter? I answer in three words—1st, Its internal and natural essence is unknown to us; it is beyond the reach of our senses. 2dly, Its most striking qualities are impenetrability, mobility, and quantity. 3dly, Its most distinguished nature, and what may be looked upon as its metaphysical and represented essence, is the capacity it has of becoming

473.
What we are to judge of matter.

PART IV.

474-
It is not certain
that any matter
may become
every species
of body.

ming successively different sorts of bodies, and perhaps every species of body, according to the different forms of which it is susceptible.

The *perhaps* added above is not a thing so indifferently as many persons imagine, in supposing, as they do, that every particle of matter, by means of the difference of motion and figure, may naturally become all kinds of bodies. I confess that the probability is on their side; but evidence is not so likewise: for, in short, is it evident that every particle of matter is naturally susceptible of every species of motion and figure; and that there are no particular atoms, of any nature whatever, naturally incapable of acquiring the nature and essence of other particular atoms? As I see no convincing reason for establishing this opinion as certain, there is no demonstrative argument to consider it as false. Nay, perhaps it might help to explain what ancient philosophy meant to express by the famous term of *substantial form*. Be that as it may, the word *form* naturally leads us to what is necessary to be explained on the subject of forms.

CHAPTER II.

Of Form.

FORM is usually defined to be *what is least common, most particular, or most distinguished, in a being*. Though *form*, by this definition, seems capable of being applied to minds, as well as bodies; nevertheless, according to general custom, form as well as matter is said only of bodies. I would, therefore, willingly define the form of bodies, which is within the reach of our capacity, and of which we can judge, as *the portion or degree of motion and arrangement*, which determines us to give to a certain portion of matter a particular denomination, in preference to any other denomination.

It is plain I do not speak here of that *form* which might be supposed to consist in a seed, or particular atom that should surpass the reach of our senses, and consequently the extent of our knowledge; for we can say nothing of what we are incapable of knowing, and we know nothing of which we have not acquired the primary idea by the channel of experience and sensation. I speak

475.
Definition of
form.

476.
A species of
form of which
nothing is to
be said.

PART IV.

speak still less of the form of animals, whose nature is entirely unknown to us.

477.
We cannot discern the precise degree of motion and configuration that constitutes a particular form.

What has been however said of the general form of bodies, is sufficient to give us a distinct idea of all that is comprehended under the name of form purely corporeal: not that we can thereby always discern what precisely constitutes the form of each body, that is, in what degree of motion, order, situation, and configuration of its most minute parts, the form of each body consists. This is the object of physical experiments, which are generally attended with very little success: but the analogy between one form and another, and between the bodies we know and those which are unknown to us, furnishes us commonly, as to the form of bodies, with a plausible idea that satisfies the mind, and to which it readily submits.

478.
A change of disposition occasions different forms.

As it might happen, therefore, to any sensible man, who had never seen meal or bread, to imagine nearly the same difference of form and substance in them as there is between gold and brass; when he has been made to feel and see that the substance of bread is nothing but meal, the particles of which have been united by the conglutination of water which made it a paste, and still more closely joined by baking that made it bread, he will quickly judge that the water and fire have produced no other change therein, but
what

what is made by the qualities we denominate *colour* and *hardness*. We shall judge in like manner, that by a similar change, in a more or less considerable degree, and in more or less time, what is now lead or brass might become any other kind of metal, and perhaps gold. The other general reflections which relate to forms, will hold the place of *First Truths in Natural Philosophy*; and we shall begin with these as the *Appendix*, or Fifth Part of this work, in which we propose to explain the knowledge that may hold the place of First Truths, with respect to each of the Literary Sciences most generally practised.

CHAPTER II

A P P E N D I X.

First Truths in the Sciences of Natural
Philosophy, Phyfic, Jurisprudence, and
Divinity.

A P P E N D I X.

First Treatise in the Sciences of Natural
Philosophy, Pneumatics, and
Divinity.



NATURAL PHILOSOPHY.

BESIDES what has been laid down respecting matter and form, all the first truths that can be discovered in natural philosophy are comprised in its uncertainty and incomprehensibility. We have seen (N^o. 213.) that the essence of things in general, and the nature of every substance, is impenetrable to our capacity. We have likewise observed that all we conceived of matter and form were no more than general and vague ideas, which can afford us but a very superficial knowledge of natural bodies.

And indeed, on the one hand, we know nothing but by experience, which extends no further in us than our sensations and the reach of our senses, which are confined within very narrow limits. On the other side, natural bodies, each in its form, are constituted only by certain modifications, circumstances, or qualities of rest or motion, of figure or arrangement, or of quantity or situation, in parts so imperceptible that our senses cannot reach them; so that, in order to discover what they are, we have no other

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resources but conjectures and systems, examples and comparisons, and probabilities or possibilities, which, at bottom, afford us no certainty of any thing: they are limited therefore to opinions, that we consider as sufficiently supported when we can thence form a chain, or consequences, in which no contradiction appears.

Though we should however allow these privileges to the science of natural philosophers, yet a judicious person will not be the less authorised to look upon it as a species of romance. In matters of history, we in fact call romances those works of conjecture, that are composed in order to shew what might have probably been the cause or effect of an historical fact that is asserted. Thus from a simple fact may be formed several different romances, that are even contradictory to each other, without any contradiction appearing in each taken separately. We shall even see a very feasible relation of the matters therein contained, without being able to perceive any shadow of contradiction: those romances are not the more true on that account; nor will a rational man receive as truth any such works, however ingenious and well-supported they may be, whilst it is evident that nine, at least, in ten of them, are absolutely fictitious, and that there is no rule for judging as to the cer-

certainty of the tenth. This is what is found APPENDIX.
in the romance of natural philosophy.

An effect in nature, by the help of a system, may readily appear feasible, possible, and even plausible and probable, whilst various other systems may appear equally so, and do appear so to other men. But what appears possible to them is not therefore so: (N^o. 259, and 260.) what they attribute to beings, with whose first principles and secret springs they are not intimately acquainted, may very well contain a real contradiction, though there be no contradiction in what they imagine. We are certain that two ideas; such as we actually have them in our minds; imply no contradiction; but we are not sure that the things unknown to our senses and experience, to which we apply those ideas, are in reality the same as our ideas represent them. Let us judge of this by a most familiar example already quoted of corn, which successively becomes different bodies.

We plainly see the *corn* become *meal*: our senses shew us that it is by simply breaking or dividing the parts of the corn. We know likewise in what manner the *meal* becomes *bread*, but less clearly; for our senses only shew us that it is a mixture of water and meal, to which the action of fire is added: but how is the water insinuated into each imperceptible particle of

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meal?

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meal? Our senses, I say, begin to be lost, and our minds to discern less clearly. Again, in what manner does bread become chyle? Our senses have scarcely any perception, and our minds still less: if we open the stomach of an animal, we do not perceive what is the cause of the formation of the chyle. Is it the heat of the stomach? Why does not every other heat produce the same effect? What is the degree, quality, and nature of this heat, whose action is sometimes stopped by the addition of a new heat? Is it a particular acid residing in the stomach? Where does it particularly reside? Why can we not distinguish, or even perceive it, on opening the body of an animal? Besides, as there are numberless sorts of acids, of what species is that? Is it of the nature of a lemon, of that of vinegar, verjuice, or aqua fortis? What an abyss is here for those who are capable of thinking! As for those who do not reflect, they see every thing at once. These have been told that it is an *acid* in the stomach which occasions digestion; they have frequently repeated the same thing: there is no difficulty in the matter with respect to them, because they see none. If we advance a step further, and seek to know how the chyle becomes *blood*, a new abyss opens to our view; we know not even when, how, or where the chyle changes colour and becomes red. We
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talk of, dispute about, and form different ideas and systems of the matter: but, as a mere system is a romance, until it be confirmed by the senses united with the light of reason, it teaches us nothing certain; so that, in the place of actual truth, which is wanting, we substitute the shadow or appearance of truth, each of us according to our fancy: and this is what is called the science of Natural Philosophy.

Let us apply this reflection to each of the parts of natural philosophy; to the divisibility of matter, which constitutes the main part of corporeal beings, and to the qualities whence results the form of each of them; to the particular dispositions that radically constitute the hardness and heaviness of bodies: all which it is essential to know, in order to have a just and plausible idea of the real constitution of bodies. Let us apply the same reflection to the general constitution of the universe, and to the formation of every thing that makes a part of it, for the explanation and science of natural philosophy: we shall find on one side the whirlwinds of Des Cartes and his three elements incompatible with any vacuum; on another side, the atoms of Gassendi and Epicurus in a motion inseparable from a vacuum: each of these two systems is supported without a contradiction. This, as has been observed, is very suitable to the character of a romance. But

is the truth thereof better known, or more certain? We must be content, say they, when we can discover nothing that is more satisfactory. But if we can find none but imaginary ideas, cannot we avoid seeking them? Cannot we adhere to this essential point; to be satisfied that we know nothing, and can know nothing, as to the first principles of nature?

In the mean while, as we have no principles but what are impenetrable, let us apply our thoughts in order to know the effects of Nature, which are obvious to our senses; and let us at least know what she produces, since we cannot discover how she produces it. By a continued investigation of effects, experience will inform us of what may, and ought to be known.

P H Y S I C,

AS Phyfic has the same principles with natural philosophy, of which it is no more than an extension and application, in order to preserve the life and health of man; we nearly see what may be expected from it in practice. It is founded on experience; but, according to its own peculiar maxims, this experience is as dangerous as the study of the art is extensive. *Ars longa, experimentum periculosum.*

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To avoid confusion, however, in the art of preserving the life and health of man, we should distinguish the operations of surgery from all others. These, especially of late days, since they have been so considerably improved, are almost infallible in themselves: so that they prove ineffectual only through ignorance or want of dexterity in the surgeon, or of strength in the patient to support them; the rules of surgery being scarcely liable to error in any thing; because they are applied to objects that are within the reach of our senses and experience, and consequently of our reason and industry.

Let us return to the consideration of Physic, independently of surgery. Is it not likewise solely founded on experience? And what are the aphorisms, or rules of physic, but a collection of particular experiments that are applied as occasion and necessity require? But, if the experiments were such as they are here supposed, they would always be infallible, and constantly produce their effect. This however is far from being the case: the reason is, these experiments have been made on certain subjects, and in conjunctures of constitution, season, degree of disease, and a hundred other particular circumstances, which are rarely ever to be found entirely the same a second time; so that a remedy which may have succeeded twice or thrice in a pleurisy, shall fail on twenty other occasions:

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occasions: that is to say, the same disease, in two different constitutions, is no longer exactly the same in all respects; and constitutions are at least as various as the faces and external forms of men. A coat that may be well adapted to the shape and size of two or three persons, will be very unsuitable to twenty others. Besides, though constitutions should be similar or alike, a season more moist or dry, colder or warmer, air more or less pure, or more or less sharp, occasion in diseases real distinctions that are often important, and more frequently still imperceptible to all the sagacity of our senses, and all the acuteness of our understanding.

The very principles of disorders in general are in the blood, the humours, the spirits, the fibres, and the most secret and most subtle particles of the human body, into which we cannot penetrate: nor can our understanding proceed in such an enquiry but by systems and conjectures, which scarcely possess any superior degree of probability over other systems and conjectures entirely different. This we have seen; and the matter is evident from the different arguments of physicians, and from their various opinions, in the daily consultations that are held on patients: nothing is more uncommon than to find physicians united in the same sentiments.

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From this opposition or diversity of opinions, it is clear that the resolution ultimately taken, is formed as it were upon chance; and that, considering the authority and capacity of different physicians, there is as much to fear as to hope from following or relinquishing the opinion of one rather than another. Hence it might happen that physic, as being built on systems and conjectures, has not always been very salutary to the bulk of mankind; for if it frequently produces beneficial effects, which we cannot doubt, experience demonstrates that it likewise occasions injurious consequences; so that, in countries where the most celebrated physicians flourish, we do not see that the inhabitants are less frequently ill, or longer lived, excepting however when surgery is concerned, than in those places where no particular profession of physic is exercised, and where every one preserves himself as well as he can, and according to the sense he has of the nature of the disease, and of death.

It would be wrong, however, to have less respect on that account for physic and physicians, or to complain, as people do sometimes, that they only deceive and impose on us. It is not them we are to blame, but ourselves, if we are deceived. They do their best, and act according to the rules of an art that cannot penetrate farther than it does into the principles of nature.

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This we should know; and when they have employed all their study and knowledge, what can they do more? They may perhaps do us an injury, but more probably they will afford us relief; and one thing at least is certain, that there is no profession in the universe from which we have more to hope. "After all," said an eminent statesman, "when I am sick, I shall rather have recourse to my physician than my lawyer."

It is moreover certain, that great advantages may be derived from a physician, who, without relying on any of those systems in which the art of physic is, perhaps too generally, thought to consist, but well knowing the principles of the constitution of the human body, has great experience in the most common disorders, and best approved medicines, with a large fund of good sense, a perfect knowledge of the constitution of the patient he attends, and a particular and sedulous observation of the most minute symptoms of the disease.

Such a physician will appear still more estimable, perhaps, if he be less studious to discover remedies more expensive, and of difficult use, than those designed by providence for re-establishing the health of the ordinary ranks of mankind, of which the application is simple and easy, and of which also the most essential part frequently consists in diet, rest, and patience.

JURISPRUDENCE.

JURISPRUDENCE is the knowledge of laws established for the maintenance of order and peace in civil society. It is with this view that it prescribes, in detail, certain maxims in order to determine disputes that arise among men; so that civilians, who make those maxims their principal guides, respect them as so many oracles, of the truth of which it is not allowed to entertain a doubt. They think right, as they consider those maxims already established in a nation or country, where, if they be once adopted, they should be faithfully and constantly obeyed, as furnishing true rules for terminating or preventing disputes that might arise in that nation. But some people seem to imagine that the laws which they follow are the true rules of reason and common sense: this however must not be admitted: it is rather a first truth, with respect to jurisprudence, that the chief use of laws is to establish permanent regulations for mankind, that they may know how they are to conduct themselves, and avoid dissensions and law-suits. What is however prescribed by one law is no farther judicious, but that another law,

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law, enjoining the direct contrary, may be equally conformable to reason and good sense. This is obvious in the form of the laws of different nations or provinces. In one, the eldest sons of families inherit the estates; in another, all the children are equal sharers in the inheritance: in some, women may enjoy the fortune of their husbands; in others they cannot. This matter is evident in a thousand other instances. Now, among so many contradictory laws, it does not appear that one is manifestly more founded on reason than another.

If, indeed, common sense were really conspicuous on one particular side, the majority of mankind would have followed it. (No. 33, and the following.) Nations or provinces, on the contrary, adhere constantly to their own laws; and none of them are willing to allow other laws to be more rational, at least with respect to the total effects of a law: for, as to certain circumstances, they will not hesitate to acknowledge but that a law, which is approved on the whole, may have some particular inconvenience; but greater inconveniences will be found in a different law, it being the nature of all sublunary things to be subject to inconveniences.

It is doubtless one, to leave ten or twelve children together without any fortune, in order to give five or six hundred or five or six thousand a year to the eldest son, as is often the case in England

land and Normandy: but there is another inconvenience by dividing such a fortune between a dozen children, so as to leave none of them in a condition to support the rank and dignity of the family, and of course disabling them from procuring protection, friends, respect or interest for their brothers and sisters. It is therefore clear, that there are inconveniences in each of the various laws of different countries, and that it cannot be absolutely determined which has a superior excellence over the rest; the opinions and sentiments of mankind being as various on the subject, as countries and nations.

That is, said an able lawyer, the defect of particular laws, known by the name of Common Law, which arbitrary practice and blind custom have established, as it were, by chance or accident; but it is not the same with regard to the Roman code, which constitutes the substance of what is eminently distinguished by the appellation of Jurisprudence; because it is the fruit of the purest reasoning and most profound researches of the human mind. The lawyer would thereby fain insinuate, that we could not oppose any rule of the Roman institutes without acting at the same time contrary to common sense: whereupon he expatiated with great eloquence, in support of the Roman Law, that authorises adoptions: Owing to the wisdom of this law, said he, it

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it is not blind and inconsiderate nature that gives children and heirs to fathers, who are men of merit and probity; it is reason that directs them to select those whom they find worthy of them. It is easy to judge how far the language of an eloquent lawyer might be extended; but for my own part, without attempting to borrow any assistance from oratory, I simply asked him whether the law of adoption among the Romans did not extend to all fathers in general; or whether he thought all fathers were equally governed by equity and reason, with respect to all their children? If not, as experience demonstrates, how dangerous must it be to give up a fortune and family to the absolute disposal of a father whose mind may be replete with prejudice, capricious notions, errors, and even injustice and cruelty to some of his children; and to what purpose do men expose themselves to such inconveniences? In order to bestow the name of father and son in an arbitrary manner, on others besides those on whom Nature has conferred them, and whom she has actually made, one truly a father, and the other as truly a son; imposing on the one, an obligation of real kindness, that of real obedience on the other, on both, mutual affection; sentiments which, unfortunately, are not always equally found in the natural inclinations of different persons, but which, where the natural inclinations

inclinations are defective, should be supplied by reason and equity. Of those nature has qualified all men to form a judgement. The argument might be extended much farther against this law, which is the boast of Roman jurisprudence; and I am persuaded it must appear to more than one half of mankind rather contradictory, than conformable, to the purest sentiments of nature.

Many lawyers, however, cannot be readily made to comprehend this, owing to their seldom judging of things in themselves, and to the prejudice they have contracted from the habitual practice of subjecting their ideas to established regulations. Men accustomed to saying, *It is the law*, confound those words with the following, *It is reason*: and it is, indeed, true that those expressions may, in one sense, be taken for each other; for, *It is the law*, implies that *it is rational* to obey it in that particular country; to determine there, according to that law, whatever disputes may arise with regard to what it enjoins; and even to pay no regard, on such an occasion, to all the arguments that may be objected against it; for though they should be equally rational, or even more so, they are no longer admissible, with respect to our actions in the country where the law is already established. But, without dwelling longer upon the matter, a mind impressed with laws which he has considered as the only rules
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of prudent conduct, confines all his reason to them, and looks no farther. It is nearly the same with respect to decrees ratified by the supreme legislature of the countries where we reside: though they may have been made without a just discernment, these decrees however, so ratified, hold the place of reason.

But why these reflections with regard to jurisprudence, when it has been already acknowledged that reason enjoins us to submit to the laws? Because, on a variety of occasions which the laws cannot particularly and circumstantially include, or with regard to which they have not been sufficiently explicit, Jurisprudence should emancipate herself from the shackles of authority, in order to find out, among all the laws of the universe, or rather in the law of Nature, which is the fountain of all others, an impartial rule of determination, according to the circumstances or particular merits of the case. There seems, in fact, to be a mistake with regard to laws in general; it is in supposing that they have provided for all cases. Hence it has been established as a maxim in many courts, that an action or suit must be either gained or lost entirely, by supposing one of the two parties in the same action to be totally in the right, and the other totally in the wrong. Now I am apt to think it might rather be admitted as a first truth, that, in most actions or suits

suits which are just suits or actions, neither of the two parties is absolutely right or wrong; because where the law is not perfectly clear, it must not be looked upon to decide; and if it does not decide, it is as if there were no law; and where there is no law, neither of the two parties has acted contrary to law, and neither should lose the cause: if neither the one nor the other should lose it, so neither has, by virtue of the laws, more right to gain it than the other; and in that case, far from giving a decree against one rather than the other, all that remains to be done is to divide the matter equally, if the law of nature furnishes no better rule for a determination.

But to what numberless obscurities, interpretations, distinctions, and exceptions, is not the law of nature itself subject? To obviate these inconveniences, to which positive laws are still more liable, the principal care in deciding a dispute or action, should be to attend to the circumstances of the case, as they cannot be too minutely examined: and in reality, though the decision should be clear, according to the express words of the law, yet a simple circumstance often requires a decision entirely different: and this is what chiefly occasions so great a contrariety in a considerable number of decrees grounded upon the same law.

This is the rule followed by two of the most equitable tribunals in France; the Court of the

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Marshals of France for the nobility, and that of the Consular Judges with respect to the mercantile body. The latter have had, for a time, some written regulations; but it is a matter of doubt, upon the whole, whether this circumstance has contributed to render their decrees more equitable. Written laws can rarely ever enter into a detail of circumstances which are generally of the greatest use towards the just decision of a law-suit; whilst such laws, on the other hand, impose subjection to a number of formalities, which, however judicious they may be in themselves, tend less, in fact, to support the cause of equity, than to encourage and extend the arts of chicanery. Nor do we in reality see, in those countries where there are but few written laws, that justice is less faithfully administered than in any other place. If errors and injustice be committed there sometimes, through the personal defects of the judges, and though such misfortunes should be as frequent in those places as in countries that have the greatest multiplicity of laws; they have the advantage at least to be freed from those irksome delays and heavy charges, which attend the formalities and various interpretations of written laws; which are certainly the most intolerable and vexatious burthen of law-suits, and one of the most destructive plagues of civil society.

D I V I N I T Y.

NATURAL Religion, or the simple dictates of reason alone, teach us that we must equally submit our minds and hearts; our understanding and will, to God; our minds, in judging true whatever he commands us to believe; our will, by inclining it to all that he enjoins us to practise. On one hand, the authority of a God who is incapable either of deceiving us, or being deceived himself; on the other side, his purity and sanctity, which can exact nothing but what is just, carry with them the fullest conviction of the truth of those matters.

The incomprehensibility therefore of those mysteries, which religion proposes as objects of our faith, affords no pretext to a rational mind to dispute their truth: the most simple light of nature informs us that God can, and really has performed things absolutely incomprehensible to the very limited ideas of human capacity, and that he can impose very wise commands upon us, the wisdom of which we may not fully discern. These are points which, in matters of religion and divinity, may be looked upon as so many first truths, in the sense mentioned (N^o. 90.) The following should be equally admitted.

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It is the christian religion that teaches us what God proposes to our faith and practice. This religion is no other but the body of the faithful, or church of Christ, which testifies what God has said and commanded: so that true divinity solely consists in proving, first, that the testimony of the Christian church is irreproachable; secondly, that the same church, in consequence of the commands of God, teaches us the articles that constitute the object of our belief and worship. Every thing else appears a matter of supererogation in divinity.

And, in fact, should it be demonstrated that the doctrines of religion are conformable to the purest light of human reason, it might be allowed to be an ingenious and even useful exercise; but it would rather belong to the province of philosophy than that of divinity, as the business of the latter is only to establish articles of religion; and the conformity between the word of God and human reason is no article of religion. Religion proposes its doctrines to us that we may believe them, and not to have them justified at the bar of human reason: not but that many of them are perfectly consonant to reason; but all not being equally so, and being above the reach of our understanding, it appears that Divinity should not undertake to prove its dogmas; unless so far as to prove that
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the church of Christ proposes them to our belief as taught by God, without any regard to what human reason may admit or reject: for, if human reason be employed in support of certain points of religion, other articles, in which that reason can have no concern, would, on that account, be less supported; a circumstance that appears dangerous to the sanctity and strength of our faith,

There are in reality many doctrines to which mere human reason cannot be reconciled, as they contain mysteries entirely supernatural; that is, beyond the utmost limits of our natural capacity, and which it never can reach naturally. Would it not therefore be using weapons against ourselves, to pretend to prove to reason a thing which we acknowledge reason cannot reach?

Some persons pretend to say, that Divinity undertakes only to prove that our dogmas are above the powers of reason, without being contrary to reason. I know not whether people have a very clear idea under those expressions; for, if we acknowledge that an object is above reason and its powers, how are we to prove that this object is not contrary to it? In order to be able to shew the opposition or non-opposition of any object to reason, it is necessary we should be perfectly acquainted with the object in every

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particular belonging to it; otherwise some part of the object would be unknown to us; and, if unknown, how are we to prove that the part so unknown is not contrary to reason? It would be like attempting to prove, or assert, that a medicine, to which, in some respects, we are strangers, is no way contrary to reason in those very respects; but how are we to be certain of this, if we have no knowledge of it?

We may indeed very justly prove, in general, and we should prove, that our dogmas are not contrary to reason, inasmuch as we cannot rationally dispute the truth of a doctrine, when we acknowledge that God judges and declares it to be true: and, in that sense, our dogmas not only are not contrary to reason, but are actually conformable to it; as reason actually suggests that they deserve to be esteemed true from the judgment and truth of God. It does not however appear, that on this account we are authorised in an attempt to prove the truth of a doctrine, as being only above reason, and not contrary to reason; for, with regard to what we acknowledge to be above our reason, considering it as such, we cannot rationally undertake to prove any thing absolutely for or against it; we can neither rationally affirm nor deny any thing concerning it, as it is beyond the reach of our under-
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derstanding, and unreasonable to attempt to employ our reason on an object which we acknowledge it cannot comprehend.

When an adversary, therefore, attacks any of the mysteries of Christianity, upon a pretence that they are contrary to reason, instead of refuting him by arguments relative to the nature of the particular object in dispute, which is above the reach of our understanding, the shortest answer, and at the same time the most plausible and solid that can be given, is, to say that the objection is ridiculous and frivolous; for, as it relates to an object which we declare to be supernatural, and above the natural powers of human understanding, we thereby acknowledge it to be of a nature incapable of being either attacked or defended by mere natural reason, without the assistance of divine authority.

It is however necessary to observe, that the dogmas of faith include supernatural truths, in such a manner as to be united with natural ideas within the reach of our capacity: for example, this doctrine, *God became man*, results from three ideas, which are, 1st, The idea of God; 2dly, The idea of man; 3dly, The idea of the hypostatic and substantial union of God with man. The two first are within the natural reach of the human mind; and if we admit Jesus Christ to

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have been *God* and *man*, we may very naturally and very justly conclude, that, as *God*, he was *immortal, omnipotent, &c.* and that, on the other hand, as *man*, he was *mortal, passive, &c.* for, as our mind hath naturally the idea both of *God* and *man*, it may thence likewise naturally conclude whatever is necessarily united either with the idea of *God*, or the idea of *man*: but, with regard to the third idea included in the dogma, which is the idea of the *union of God with man in the same person*, our mind, and our reason, are lost therein; nor should we ever employ them on such an object, unless to shew, as hath been observed, that this mystery, which is naturally incredible to the human mind, becomes very credible by the authority of *God*, who revealed it, and by the authority of the church of *Christ*, which, by the miracles of its establishment and propagation, testifies that *God* truly revealed it.

This answer dissipates the vain and subtle arguments of Socinians, and of all pretended free-thinkers. In vain will they say, that we admit doctrines, which, as they destroy the light of reason, should be rejected by that very reason, as this was given to us by *God* for our guide and direction. In answer to the Socinians, as well as to *Le Clerc*, we say, that it is ridiculous in them to attempt to shew a contradiction in mysteries,

steries, which we admit to be above the reach of our understanding and theirs; that what is above the powers of our reason, does not destroy reason; and, so far from having any right to reject a truth taught by God, on the pretence of not comprehending it, we are indispensibly obliged to acknowledge that whatever an infinite being, such as God, be in himself, and all that he can perform, infinitely surpasses our highest conception: so that for any man to deny the truth of a fact, merely because he does not conceive it, when it is supported by just testimonies that make it credible, is no less absurd in him, than it would be impertinent in a man born blind to deny the existence of colours and light, because, with all the efforts of his mind, it is impossible for him to form any idea of those things. This answer, I say, is incomparably better than to enter into any discussion with Socinians, in order to shew the possibility of the mystery of the Incarnation; for, in disputes on such sublime articles, occasion may be given to the enemies of the Christian faith to make false and sophistical replies, that cannot be easily distinguished from such as are true, and which thereby expose contentious persons to the danger of being perplexed with doubts and uncertainties, where they would have found nothing but a
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judicious and plausible motive for subjecting their weak and natural capacities to the infinite intelligence of God, supposing he has revealed certain truths, and to the authority of the apostles and church of Christ, which teaches us that God has actually revealed them. If a proper attention were paid to these First Truths in the Science of Divinity, the study thereof, to all appearance, would, by that means, become more simple and short, and the advantages thence resulting more solid and extensive.

REMARKS

On the Philosophical Writings of DES
CARTES, LOCKE, MALBRANCHE, LE
CLERC, CROUZAS, and REGIS.

R E M A R K S

On the Philological Wings of Dea
Carter, Local Manager, Inc.
Carter, Local Manager, Inc.



REMARKS

On the principles, or metaphysics, of DES. CARTES,
 Printed at Amsterdam, in 1692.

ARTICLE I.

I. *Page 1.* **T**HE care which Descartes takes in advising us to be on our guard against all prejudices in general, is one of the most effectual methods of leading men to the discovery of truth: and, in fact, from his time, men have learned to reason with more circumspection, and in many respects with greater success.

II. *Pag. 3.* The attention which he excited, with regard to the nature of the soul or mind, and that of bodies or matter, has more clearly and precisely made known the difference between these two substances, which it is of the utmost importance to distinguish properly.

III. *Pag. 5.* It is a remark, not only judicious, but of the most extensive use, to have observed
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that we must not seek to define every thing, as the generality of philosophers have endeavoured to do; nor at least attempt to make a thing more clear by a definition; as things that are very simple and obvious of themselves, such as sentiment, are more clear than any definition that can be adduced.

IV. *Pag. 9.* The reflection made by Des Cartes, on the superiority of the being of God, is the basis of natural religion. The intelligence of God, says he, is so transcendently superior to all others, that we should not make the least difficulty of believing what he reveals to us of the mysteries of his nature and power; so that what he is in himself, and what he can perform, are not the less real, though they surpass all the powers of our comprehension and ideas. It is proper to remark that this observation of Des Cartes is common to him and all philosophers, and even to those who differ most from him, such as Locke: this plainly shews the extravagant folly of some pretended free-thinkers, and really superficial minds, who refuse to believe the mysteries of religion, on the pretence of not comprehending them.

V. *Pag. 7.* Des Cartes has the honour of being the first in our times, who has insisted on this maxim, equally certain and plausible; that it

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is unreasonable in finite capacities like ours to attempt to comprehend infinity, or reason about it.

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VI. *Pag.* 10. It is, says he, a wrong way of thinking, to give our *assent*, even to truth, when we do not clearly perceive it; and when we only suppose that we see it, or have seen it, clearly. This is a maxim of the greatest utility, to prevent our minds from being deceived by various appearances of truth.

Pag. 21, 22. Among a variety of causes of our prejudices, he has pointed out the most contagious, and most important, which is, that we affix our ideas to words; and that afterwards, recollecting rather words than ideas, we give our *assent* to words, which we do not understand, from a supposition that we have clearly understood them. This principle is perhaps the most solid and essential of all the philosophy of Des Cartes, and it were to be wished that he himself had never deviated from it in practice.

VII. The principles and method of Des Cartes have been in general of very great utility, by habituating us to analyse words—and ideas with greater precision; for, by urging us to a closer investigation of opinions proposed, they have more securely conducted us in the road to truth.

ARTICLE II.

VIII. *Pag. 1.* “In order to oppose every pre-
 “judice that is possible, we shall doubt whether
 “any thing sensible or imaginable exists, &c.
 “We shall also doubt of what we considered as
 “most certain, such as mathematical demon-
 “strations, &c.”

Remark. We are persuaded that Des Cartes did not mean to say any thing but what was rational on this occasion: but nothing can be, in fact, less rational than what he says; for, if we conceive the terms, can we ever doubt whether a triangle be different from a circle? What Des Cartes means here, and what has made so much noise, to no manner of purpose, is reduced to a sensible, but common maxim, which he explains, *pag. 23. Art. 25.* and which is, that, *in order to pursue an infallible method in philosophy, we should be extremely cautious not to give way to any opinion, not even to those we have received, if, upon a second examination, we should not find the truth again confirmed.*

IX. *Pag. 2.* “We know not whether God,
 “has not made us of such a nature as to be de-
 “ceived in every thing.”

Remark. Notwithstanding this pretended ignorance, can we be deceived in thinking that we exist,

exist; and that two and two make four? Why then introduce a motive for doubting, where it is absolutely impossible to doubt? Does this denote a clear idea of what is advanced?

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Besides, we are exhorted to doubt, at the very moment when it is supposed that we have not as yet a knowledge of any thing true; we therefore do not then know whether a God exists. In that case what God may, or may not, have performed, is no motive nor reason for doubting, as what we know not can be no motive with us.

X. Pag. 3. Art. 8. "We see clearly that
"neither figure nor extension belong to our
"thought."

Remark. Des Cartes confounds here, *seeing clearly that a thing is not*, with *not seeing that it is in any manner whatever*.

XI. Pag. 2. *I think; therefore I exist.* Vid N^o. 12.
Des Cartes says that this is the first and most certain thing we know; *prima & certissima cognitio*; in which he has spoken with very little propriety or truth, if he pretended that the reflection *I think*, is the first proposition or thought we pay attention to, in order to make use of it as the principle of our reasoning. Thousands have drawn a multiplicity of conclusions, without having ever, perhaps, had the proposition, *I think*, actually

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in their minds: it is not therefore the first principle; and, at most, it can only be said to be one of the first principles. Besides, why should all our conclusions, or arguments, be deduced from one principle? If I admit with Des Cartes this first principle alone, *I think*; or, with the generality of philosophers, this other single first principle, *It is impossible for a thing to be, and not to be*; from which of the two shall I draw this consequence, *There exist, therefore, other beings besides me*? or this, *All men cannot conspire to deceive me by an unanimous testimony*? There is then, in the human mind, no single principle of reasoning and knowledge, unless it be, perhaps, that on which this whole Treatise has been founded; it is, that *what is in the minds of all men is indubitably true*.

XII. Pag. 5. *The greater the objective perfection of our ideas, the more perfect also must be their cause*. This mysterious language, reduced to its just value, as far as I can see, means only what is commonly said, that the cause is more perfect than the effect: but, if the Reader will peruse the article I have written on the nature of what is *perfect*, he will see that the common axiom itself stands greatly in need of explanation; for, in fine, fire is the cause of bread, as the bread thereby ceases to be dough, to become bread. I should be glad to know in what fire is more perfect

fect than bread. Vide the Chapter of *Perfect*, REMARKS.
N^o. 267, &c.

XIII. *Pag.* 5. "Though we do not comprehend the supreme perfections of God, because it is the nature of infinity not to be comprehensible by finite beings, such as we are; nevertheless we can conceive those perfections more clearly, and more distinctly, than any corporeal things."

Remark. Des Cartes most assuredly did not reflect upon what he has here advanced. The immutability of God, and his free-will, are perfections in God; and a triangle is a corporeal substance: Whom, however, shall he be able to persuade, that we can more distinctly, and more clearly, comprehend the immutability and free-will of God, than we conceive the nature of a triangle?

XIV. *Pag.* 7. "We shall term indefinite, all those things in which we can perceive no end; such as the divisible particles of matter, or the number of stars that God is capable of creating."

Remark. With respect to us, and to what we are capable of knowing, there was no reason for distinguishing *infinite* from *indefinite*. If Des Cartes pretends to conceive any thing different

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in God when he styles him *infinite* from what he does when he terms him *indefinite*, he says things that he does not understand: for, according to him, in the very same page 7, we comprehend nothing of *infinity*; and we should not attempt to speak thereof, as we have no idea of it: he cannot therefore say, nor conceive, what *infinite* is, with regard to *indefinite*. He seems again to have confounded two things on this occasion; first, our not being able to discover any limits in God; and, secondly, seeing *that God is without limits*. In order to see that God is without limits, it would be necessary to see the absolute extent of the whole essence of God, which is infinite; a thing impossible to a finite capacity: but, to be incapable of discovering any limits in God, nothing is wanting but a finite mind like ours, that perceives an object of which the extent surpasses our understanding: but, let me repeat it again, this is nothing but the real *indefinite* of Des Cartes.

XV. *Pag.* 9. "In order to judge, not only
"the understanding is necessary, but likewise the
"will."

Remark. I know not whether Des Cartes rightly distinguished the terms here used. It is a mere nominal question: the will has no other share in the judgement, but in freely permitting the understanding to consider, or not consider,

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two ideas: if the will does not permit, the understanding cannot judge, as it hath not present the two ideas between which it is necessary to judge; and, if the will permits, it then judges. To know whether this permission of the will should be called the judgement itself, is, I say, rather a nominal question, and consequently frivolous.

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XVI. *Pag. 12.* Des Cartes endeavours to establish a difference between a clear idea and a distinct idea, but without foundation, as hath been observed in another place. Every clear idea, being perceived in its whole extent, shews entirely what it is in itself, and that it is no other idea whatever: it is in this last respect we call it a distinct idea.

XVII. *Pag. 12.* Des Cartes, having said that all that we can perceive are either things, or qualities and properties of things, includes equally among things, substance, duration, order, and number.

Remark. I do not conceive how he could have included any thing else in things but substances, taking the word *things* as excluding modifications or qualities of things. Take away all substances, what thing can remain in the world? Can there exist *duration, order, or number*, with-

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out substance? Are duration, order, and number, any other things but substances that continue, are arranged, or numbered together? Our author, therefore, appears to have been mistaken, in taking here, according to custom, arbitrary ideas of things for things themselves. Duration, order, and number, are nothing but substances under different points of view.—This he himself has expressly observed, page 15, by saying, that a thing, or substance, in not perishing immediately after the first moment of its existence, is *duration*; in its being so disposed as to concur with another thing to the same end, it is *order*; in making up, with other things, certain unities, it is *number*. Our minds have the power of considering one of those points, without paying any attention to the substance itself; and this is what is called abstraction: but we must not therefore admit as many things as abstractions, unless we would adopt an ideal world, and an imaginary philosophy.

XVIII. Page 13. “ We experience modifications in us, that relate neither to the soul nor the body, but which result from the union of the soul and body, such as *appetite*, hunger and thirst, &c.”

Remark. It is speaking very improperly, and a wrong distinction of ideas, to advance that

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appetite belongs neither to the soul nor body. The word *appetite* (and others similar in proportion) signifies two or three things: 1st, The motion that is made in the body, and by means of which the soul perceives the sentiment of *appetite*: 2dly, It signifies the sentiment itself perceived by the soul: 3dly, It means those two things united together. In the first instance, *appetite* belongs very properly and solely to the body, and is a true modification of the body; in the second case, *appetite* belongs very properly and solely to the soul, and is a real modification of the soul; in the third instance, *appetite* equally appertains both to the body and soul, as the word then signifies two modifications, one of the body, and the other of the soul, both mutually depending on each other.

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XIX. *Pag.* 13. "When we acknowledge certain propositions, we do not consider them as modifications, but as eternal truths fixed in our minds."

Remark. What Des Cartes says here, that we consider certain propositions as eternal truths, fixed in our minds, is greatly subject to illusion; for it leads us to believe, and has even persuaded many to think, that we have in our minds certain propositions or truths, which subsisted there eternally. This is a mere chimera, which has

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been fully exposed by Locke, in his *Essay on the Human Understanding*.

XX. Pag. 15. "These eternal truths are
"clearly perceived, but not by some persons,
"owing perhaps to their prejudices."

Remark. If some people do not perceive these notions, which Des Cartes has honoured with the name of *eternal truths*, and which are commonly called *axioms*, we must not ascribe it, in general, to their prejudice, but to their want of experience. Thus children, till a certain age, have not these notions, though they may have a knowledge of many other things, because they have not as yet had experience, or opportunities of observing that these notions were true. A child, for example, as soon as he begins to form any judgement, thinks, and knows very well, that *such a thing is that thing, and not another thing*; but he does not as yet observe, that *it is impossible a thing should be and not be at the same time*. The latter knowledge is derived only from experience and reflection, which in time make him sensible, that, whatever efforts he may exert, he never can be able to judge that the same thing is not what it is, *i. e.* that it is, and it is not; yet it is not by any prejudice that he was prevented from forming this judgement before,

fore, as he never was prepossessed with any contrary maxim or opinion.

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XXI. *Pag. 14.* "The word *substance* cannot be univocal with respect to God and creatures, as no idea of the word can be common to God and creatures."

Remark. I make a pause at these words, only to wonder how any man of the capacity of Des Cartes should for a moment occupy his mind with a reflection that depends entirely on a simple equivocation. Those who are versed in the practice of the schools will not fail to smile on the occasion, and no more is requisite.

XXII. *Pag. 15.* "Duration, order, and number, are not different from substances; but are only the modes or aspects under which we consider them."

Remark. This reflection is very just, and it is what I have advanced; but it does not agree with what Des Cartes has asserted *pag. 12.* where he equally includes among things, *substance, duration, order, and number*: he destroys on one side what he establishes on the other.

XXIII. *Pag. 18. Art. 43.* "Thought and extension may be considered as constituting the nature of the mind and body."

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Remark. It is true, that, with respect to us, and the natural state of things, there is no attribute by which we can more essentially discern the nature of the mind, than by *thinking*; and that of the body, than by its *being capable of extension*: but we must not forget that the nature and essence of things, according to our knowledge, are not precisely what they are in themselves (N^o. 469). Besides, we neither are, nor can be, assured that the soul always thinks (N^o. 422). It would be wrong therefore to assert, that the real and physical essence of the soul consists in actually thinking.

XXIV. Pag. 331. "We know that the world has no bounds."

Remark. It is true that we know not its bounds; but it is false to say, we know *that the world has no bounds*: it would then be infinite, and God could not enlarge it. This appears a hazardous notion, according to the dogmas of divinity; neither is it supported by any plausible argument of philosophy. What Des Cartes adds afterwards does not relate to the principles of human knowledge in general, but to the principles of natural philosophy, which forms a separate science.

XXV.

XXV. *Pag. 2. of his Book of Meditations, printed at Amsterdam, in 1698.* “The things we clearly conceive, from the very circumstance of our conceiving them, are true.”

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Remark. We have room here to lament that Des Cartes, by this proposition, on which he founds the whole system of his metaphysics, has involved true metaphysics in infinite perplexity, by confounding, as he hath done, what is true, or rather *internal truth*, with *external truth*. This shews the illusion of so many new philosophers, who, whilst they have been continually repeating *truth* and clearness in their writings, have frequently done nothing but obscure clearness itself, and adulterate truth.

XXVI. *Med. 6. Pag. 36.* “There is a real difference between the imagination, and pure intelligence, or understanding.”

Remark. This difference is a chimera, or a nominal question; but the example adduced by Des Cartes, and after him by the Author of the Art of Thinking, is manifestly wrong: it is as follows—When I figure to myself a triangle, which I consider as present, it is by the help of *imagination*; but when I think of a figure of a thousand angles, it is by pure intelligence or understanding, as I cannot represent it to myself as present; neither, in representing it to myself,

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self, shall I be able to distinguish it from a figure of nine hundred and ninety nine angles. I say that it answers no purpose to seek, in this example, any difference between the imagination and understanding; for, 1st, It would thence follow, that the imagination were more perfect than the understanding, as the one gives an idea more clear, more lively, and more present than the other; and this would be to destroy the general idea, and the very idea perhaps that Des Cartes himself intended to establish, with regard to pure intelligence. 2dly, It is distinguishing imagination from understanding to no purpose; for, in order to explain in what manner, and why we have a clearer idea of a triangle than of a figure of a thousand angles, it is sufficient to say, that we have not an idea so just, so exact and precise, of a figure of a thousand angles as of the figure of a simple triangle, because the former, being much more complicated, does not appear so distinctly either to our eyes, or to our minds; whereas a triangle, being a very simple figure, appears to both without difficulty or confusion: but it by no means follows, that the triangle is present to the mind rather by the imagination than the understanding, nor a figure of a thousand angles by the understanding rather than the imagination.

On the Metaphysics of LOCKE, in his work called
AN ESSAY ON HUMAN UNDERSTANDING.

Printed at Amsterdam, in 1700.

ARTICLE I.

MR. LOCKE is the first of the moderns who has endeavoured to investigate the operations of the human mind immediately from Nature, without suffering himself to be biassed by opinions that are supported rather by systems than real evidence: his philosophy therefore, compared to that of Des Cartes and Malbranche, appears as much superior to either, as history is to romance.

II. He generally examines every subject by the only method of reasoning with solidity; that is, by beginning with the most simple, most distinct, and most universally received ideas, that he may afterwards thence gradually deduce those lights which clear up important truths for the use and improvement of science.

IV. He has closely investigated and laid open the fallacy of various principles of Des Cartes, and other philosophers of our days, analysing in a precise and plausible manner the ideas which
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led them into error, and distinguishing particularly the ideas of *solidity* or impenetrability from those of *extension* or space.

V. Thus he very distinctly explains, *pag.* 121, the manner of our conceiving, by abstraction, the motion of a body from one place to another, without there being any necessity therefore for our thinking of other bodies that may occupy the place quitted by the first. The idea of the place so quitted is the absolute idea of *space*, and not the idea of *solidity*, as the latter expressly includes the idea of *resistance*. Granting even that space cannot really be without *solidity*, as colour cannot exist without *extension*, it does not therefore follow that the idea of space, or the idea of colour, are the idea of *extension*.

VI. *Pag.* 666. This philosopher has made an ingenious distinction between the idea of *wit* and the idea of judgement: he observes, that wit consists in forming pleasing images, by quickly collecting ideas that have some similarity or relation; judgement, on the contrary, he says, consists in discerning the most minute difference to be found in ideas that have the nearest resemblance: so that, according to this, a person may possess a great share of wit, and at the same time have but little judgement.

VII. *Pag.* 183. His reflections on the notion of *place* are just and clear. Place, according to him,

him; is nothing but the relation as to distance between one body and some other, which we suppose fixed at the time: thus, according to the relation to different bodies, a thing is said to change or not change its place. The men, for example, that are ranged on a chess-board, are said to remain in the same place, although the chess-board be moved from one place to another: the reason is, because the men are then considered with regard to the chess-board, and in that respect they remain in the same distance; but, if they be considered with regard to the chamber or room whence they are moved, they are no longer in the same relation of distance as to the room, and consequently not in the same place. It is the same thing with regard to a man in a boat or coach in progressive motion; for, with respect to the boat or coach, he may remain in the same situation, and yet be continually changing place, with regard to the different countries through which the boat or coach proceeds. In this sense the universe in general has no place, as it cannot be considered with respect to distance from any other body, there being no existence of any other body.

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VIII. *Pag.* 198. We rarely meet with any thing more judicious and more useful than what the author observes respecting *simple ideas*: it is, that men, in this particular, do not differ much as to sentiment,

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sentiment, but that they differ in the words adopted by each sect, and to which they are severally attached; which produces a confusion in discourse, and afterwards in thought.

* IX. The author discovers on all occasions a love of truth, which inclines his readers to like the road he pursues for attaining it; he appears always ready to relinquish his own opinion, whenever he is made acquainted with others of greater certainty.

ARTICLE II.

The author or the translator have not sufficiently explained certain thoughts; which has given room to imagine, that either the one or the other, or both, did not fully understand what they were about in some places, and particularly in pages 52, 150, 712, &c.

XI. The author seems to make too frequent repetitions, although this be not always a defect, in abstracted subjects, which are not at first readily conceived by the mind; nevertheless, when they are repeated, they should, if possible, be shewn in a new light; which is not always the case with Locke.

XII. Pag. 1. "*Whatever is, is.*" "This proposition," says the author, "is not universally received, as it does not enter the minds of children."

Remark.

Remark. Is not this an equivocation? As soon as we are capable of reflection, do we not consider a thing to be that thing, and not another thing? We do not always reflect upon this idea; but it takes place in all our judgements, without our reflecting upon it. The author therefore, on this occasion, seems to have confounded the reflective with the immediate thought: it is however certain, that even children themselves, more or less expressly, give their assent to this proposition, *Such a thing is that thing*: and we never can make one of them deny, or doubt inwardly, his foot to be his foot, or his hand to be his hand.

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XIII. *Pag.* 14. "It is false, to say that the use of reason discovers innate principles."

Remark. Is not this another equivocation on the words *reason* and *innate principle*? The author, in fact, is pleased, on this occasion, to call only *use of reason* the faculty of deducing consequences; but, according to the opinion of others, that faculty is termed *reasoning*, or *argumentation*; whereas the faculty of *reason* is, to discern what common sense dictates to mankind, independently of the consequences they may thence deduce. With respect to the words *innate principle*; if the author thereby means a thought of the mind continually perceived by the soul, it is ridiculous

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to admit innate principles, as experience tells us that the same thought or knowledge is not always present to our minds so as to be perceptible: but if he calls *innate principle*, what I have denominated *first truths*, it is a folly not to acknowledge such. This has been observed (No. 41.)

XIV. Pag. 38, and the following. The author asks, *Where is that practical truth which is universally received, without any difficulty or objection?*

Remark. This is one, I think: *Do nothing that is culpable in the eyes of the major part of mankind in all ages and all countries of the world.* Locke therefore advances an erroneous maxim, when he says that all men do not consider the duties of fidelity and justice as practical principles: all men, it is true, do not agree that certain articles belong to fidelity and justice; but all, excepting perhaps a few who are a sort of monsters in society, lay it down as a principle, that we must be faithful and equitable. And there are general points, which all agree to belong to fidelity and justice: for example, that *we are obliged, when in our power, to restore money, or any other deposit we have voluntarily taken charge of; or, that we should not refuse the wages promised to a man who has served us without giving us any cause of dissatisfaction.* This Locke must allow, which he seems to do, pag. 86. where he says, *there are certain truths resulting from*
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some particular ideas, which occur, as it were spontaneously, to the mind, as soon as the mind unites those ideas together in order to form propositions from them.

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He ought not therefore to have advanced a proposition of such a dangerous tendency as this: *Where is that practical truth which is universally received without any difficulty?* These maxims, says Locke, *pag. 42*, are received because they are useful; but it is from the very circumstance of their utility being naturally felt, that they are universally received without difficulty. The examples related by the author, *pag. 44*, of several enormities perpetrated without any remorse, are not well authenticated; and, although they had been fully proved, it would only prove that among mankind there are some very bad, which is evident.

XV. *Pag. 147*. "Perception is the most simple idea we receive by the method of reflection."

Remark. Perception carries its idea with itself, independently of reflection; or rather it is itself an idea, that is called *perception*, inasmuch as the mind perceives it by what is done before reflection, the latter being nothing at bottom but a second perception, which occurs on account of a first perception. The direct *idea* of perception therefore does not arise from reflection, but only

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the *reflective idea* of perception, which is preceded by the direct perception.

XVI. *Pag.* 200. "The idea of duration proceeds from the reflection we make on the succession of our ideas."

Remark. This argument of Locke does not appear to be very solid. *When we sleep*, says he, *and have no succession of ideas, we no longer have any idea of duration: the idea of duration therefore proceeds from the succession of our ideas.* A man who awakes after a profound sleep, has no idea of duration in that time.

The author apparently means, that after sleep we have no idea of the time which passed during the sleep. Now time is the measure of duration, and not duration itself; the measure of the thing, and the thing measured, being widely different: and, in fact, the man in question, without knowing how long he existed during his sleep, knows nevertheless that he did exist; and he has a very clear idea of it, as he is sensible that his existence had not been interrupted. (*See the Number of Time and Duration.*)

XVII. *Pag.* 204. "Our thoughts succeed one another with a determinate degree of celerity; so that, if the motion be made with more velocity, the succession of these motions is not perceptible to our minds. Thus, a cannon-ball
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“ successively passing through the two opposite
 “ walls of an apartment, does not suffer our
 “ minds to perceive that succession; because it
 “ is more rapidly effected than the succession of
 “ our thoughts: on the contrary, if the succession
 “ be too slowly performed, as in the hand of a
 “ clock, we can as little perceive it, because the
 “ successive motion of the hand is slower than
 “ the succession of our thoughts.”

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Remark. These reflections are ingenious; but, if I be not mistaken, they have very little solidity. The true and simple reason why we do not perceive and discern motions that are too rapid or too slow is, that the capacity of our senses is proportioned to a certain measure of velocity in motion, as it is to a certain degree of distance in extension: our senses therefore fail to distinguish a too rapid or too slow motion, as they fail to discern objects too remote or too near.

XVIII. *Pag.* 278. “ Liberty does not belong
 “ to will or desire; but only to the power of
 “ thinking or not thinking, and of moving or
 “ not moving.”

Remark. Why should not freedom or liberty belong likewise to the power of willing or rejecting? The power of moving or not moving is, as it were, no more than an external liberty, and whose exercise is something external, as the capa-

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city of quitting a place or not : but there is an exercise of liberty purely interior ; for example, in an event that happens by order of providence, it is in the power of the will to acquiesce therein, or not, to conform to, or oppose it. This is an exercise of liberty purely internal, which Locke seems not to know, and which should be known.

XIX. *Pag. 282.* The author likewise perplexes himself by attempting to prove, that *the will should not be termed free*, because, according to the manner of conceiving, will is one power, and liberty another ; so that both are but one modification, and the modification falls only on one agent, and not on another modification. All this, I say, contains no more than nominal questions : it is true, that every modification is the modification of a being or agent : but this does not prevent a modification from being the same as another modification ; that is, from being a particular circumstance of that modification : for example, motion is the modification of a ball, and its direction towards the east or west is a modification of the motion of the ball. It is therefore useless to enquire whether it is the will that should be called *free*, provided that we know that it is the man who wills, and is free. And inasmuch as he *wills* simply, it is a simple modification ; but his *freely willing* or *desiring* is a modification modified :
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when he freely wills or desires, so that what he wills may be executed by an external motion, it is a modification modified by a second modification, which is again modified by a third modification.

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XX. *Pag.* 294. "It is not the greatest advantage or good that determines the action of the will, but some actual uneasiness that is most pressing."

Remark. This uneasiness leaves to the will the power of either acting, or not acting, or it does not leave it such power: if it does leave it that power, it does not determine the will, as Locke pretends: if it does not leave it that power, free-will is destroyed by the uneasiness. This part is full of perplexing difficulties, in which we can discern nothing but errors and dangers.

XXI. *Pag.* 366. "Minds are capable of motion; and the soul changes its place when the body moves from one place to another, as the soul cannot act where it is not."

Remark. This is another verbal difficulty. If the author means, by *motion*, a modification similar to that we call motion in bodies, it is by no means true that the soul is capable of motion, as a spiritual being is not capable of a corporeal modification: if he implies, by *motion*, either the thought or will of man, or the motion which hap-

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pens in the body through the thought and will of the soul, in that sense the soul is capable of motion. To know whether it changes its place, is another nominal question: it is certain that the soul does not act, but where the body is, to which it is united: if people mean to call place, or change of place, the place where it makes an impression on the body, and to which the body is moved, the soul has a place.

XXII. *Pag. 396.* What the author says relative to identity, appears very strange: for example, that *a man who should totally lose his memory would no longer be the same person, but that he would nevertheless be the same man.* The identity of the man, according to him, consists only in a simple succession of parts vitally united to the same organised body. This is saying that the man is the same, in the very part which makes him no longer the same; for whosoever says *succession*, expresses a change or cessation of identity; or, to speak more clearly, and without any circumlocution, it is saying that the man being capable only of analogical identity, what cannot properly be termed identity, is nothing but what is corporeal. Besides, the author, in fact, says, *to the same body.* What can be his meaning, I really know not. The body is nothing else, really and substantially, but parts that succeed one another: to say therefore that those

those parts are united to the same body, is saying that the same body is united with the same body, or with itself. In fine, to say that those parts are united vitally to the same organised body, is a third difficulty, as perplexing as the two first; for what is it *to be united vitally to the same body*? Is it not as difficult to unravel, as identity itself? According to this, a man who has lost all remembrance of what he had done while he was intoxicated with liquor, is no longer the same person he was when intoxicated; and if he should be punished for what he had done in that situation, it is, our author says, because the laws cannot absolutely distinguish at what precise time he ceased to be the same person. By this rule, there is not a man in the world that is the same person he was in the womb of his mother. I cannot imagine how so great a man as Locke could have been capable of uttering such despicable trifles, the bare repetition of which is an ample refutation: he seems himself to treat them as extravagant notions; and, with equal truth, he might call them pernicious *opinions*, with respect to all sound principles of religion, morality, and common sense.

XXIII. *Pag. 442.* "The cause of the obscurity of our ideas arises from the imperfection of our organs, or, &c."

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Remark. Locke seems, on this occasion, to contradict himself, as he observes, towards the latter end of the same page, that an idea *is not confused*, but with respect to words; then it is not confused in itself, nor is its confusion produced by the organs. The fact is, he perceived that what had been generally said with regard to the obscurity and confusion of ideas, was very confused, and very obscure; and therefore endeavoured to elucidate the subject, but without success. I am apt to think, he said would have said what has been taken notice of by me on another occasion: as he hath observed (page 446) that the confusion of an idea *always relates to two ideas*, he might have added, *two ideas with regard to which a tacit judgement occurs*; for, without this tacit judgement, one idea, or two ideas, being always clearly present to the mind of themselves, would never produce any confusion therein.

XXIV. *Pag.* 458. "All our simple ideas are complete, because they cannot but be conformable to the powers God has placed in men to produce such sensation in us.

Remark. Either the author, on this occasion, considers the idea such as it is, in itself, in our minds, or else with respect to external objects: every idea in itself is complete, as being perfectly in our minds what it actually is there; but,

but, with regard to external objects, the most accurate ideas are never complete, because they never represent to us, with perfect precision, all the particulars of an object distinct from us. (N^o. 201, and 212.)

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XXV. *Pag. 484, and the following.* "The author speaks of the extravagant combination of certain ideas, or of the bad effects which it produces."

Remark. Amongst the ingenious and just observations he has made on this occasion, he has omitted two observations which I think are essential. The first is, that this combination of ideas would produce no injurious effect, if it did not form a tacit judgement. Secondly, this association of ideas is never defective, unless with regard to an object existing distinct from our minds, which is not, in itself, such as our minds represent it; and this would produce no bad consequence, if no judgement intervened.

XXVI. *Pag. 318.* "A figure terminating a space by three lines is the essence of a triangle both real and nominal."

Remark. Locke had not yet divested himself of general prejudice on this occasion, nor was he sufficiently attentive to preserve consistency in his ideas. He had previously asserted, that nominal

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nominal essence is *an abstraction of the mind affixed to a name*: he declared in another place, that *nothing really subsists but in a particular manner*; that is, excluded from a state of abstraction, (pag. 516, 517, and elsewhere.) There is therefore no essence that is, at the same time, both *nominal* and *real*; for real essence is the state of the thing excluded from abstraction, and nominal essence, the state of the thing taken abstractedly; and indeed nominal, ideal, or abstracted essence, may be applied to many particular beings; whereas real essence is only applicable to one particular being, as real essence includes the different qualities peculiar to each thing, of which it is the essence.

XXVII. Pag. 330. "We can take nothing
"from the idea of white, and the idea of red,
"so as to make them concur in any common
"resemblance; whereas the ideas of man and
"brute concur in the idea of animal."

Remark. The idea of colour is no less common, and is as properly applicable both to *white* and *red*, as the idea of animal is both to man and brute. We cannot therefore discover what the author meant on this occasion,

Pag. 617. "The precepts of the law of Na-
"ture

"ture are clear, and have been rarely contro-
"verted."

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Remark. This is very true, if it be understood of the precepts prescribed by the first principles of the law of Nature : but it does not fully correspond with what the author has said (page 38), when he asked, *Where is that practical virtue which is generally received?*

XXVIII. Pag. 642. "The whole art of Rhetoric, from the frequent use of figurative expressions, serves only to insinuate false ideas. Mankind in general shew little attention to the advancement of truth, in appropriating the most flattering rewards of literature to such seductive arts."

Remark. The invective here thrown out is not perhaps unjust, but it appears exaggerated. Eloquence makes use of figurative words and sentences, in order to insinuate the ideas it would impress, in a more forcible and striking manner, which is an advantage : it is an abuse of eloquence to use it for the purpose of insinuating false ideas ; but the improper use made of an art by individuals does not lessen its value. Orators are justly rewarded, because it is presumed that they speak on the side of truth, and that nothing is more estimable than the capacity of displaying truth in all its beauty. Many philosophers are held

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held in little esteem for want of that talent: truth is as it were buried in their minds, and they are incapable of bringing it to light.

XXIX. *Pag.* 666. "The congruity or incongruity of our ideas consists, 1st, In their identity; 2dly, In their relation; 3dly, In their connexion; 4thly, In their real co-existence."

Remark. If Locke had entirely analysed his subject, I believe he would have found that every relation is at bottom a specific identity of ideas; and, in taking away that identity, we take away all relation. The author moreover seems on some occasions to confound the simple connexion of ideas with their real co-existence. (*pag.* 667, *pag.* 69, and *pag.* 691, 9, and 10.)

XXX. *Pag.* 683. "Our knowledge is not always clear, though our ideas are."

Remark. This part of Locke is not explained, although it is worthy of investigation: the fault may perhaps be owing to the Translator. The Author, as far as I can conjecture, means, that with clear ideas of an object, we have not however a knowledge of its real existence distinct from our minds, which is true; but it is not true, that the knowledge may not be clear when the

the ideas which make it the subject of them are themselves clear. REMARKS.

XXXI. *Pag. 710, and 712.* "We cannot find the connexion between the ideas we have."

Remark. The author seems to confound the conformity between one idea and another, and the conformity between an idea and an object distinct from us.

XXXII. *Pag. 720.* "Existence is not required for real knowledge: thus mathematical truths subsist independently of the existence of things."

Remark. If Locke speaks consequentially in admitting a *real* knowledge, and a knowledge *that is not real*, he should have adduced a clear distinction between both: this he has not done. For my own part, I call *real* or *external* knowledge, the congruity of our idea with the existence of things subsisting distinct from us; and *ideal* or *internal* knowledge, the congruity between one idea and another, independently of the existence of things: this is intelligible, and distinguishes what our author and many others have generally confounded. He admits however, for a *real truth*, a conformity of our ideas with things; but what things? As he supposes them independent

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dent of existence, they can be no other than ideas.

Pag. 836. "In the testimonies traditionally known." (See N^o. 177. and the next.)

On the Metaphysics of MALBRANCHE, in his ENQUIRY INTO TRUTH. Printed at Paris, in 1712.

ARTICLE I.

THE reputation of this writer, in the philosophical world, is so well known, that it seems unnecessary to point out in what he has been most conspicuous among philosophers. At first he was no more than a mere Cartesian; but he threw such a brilliant profusion of light round the doctrine of Des Cartes, that it was more universally spread by the lively flights of imagination and elegant diction of the disciple, than by all the arguments and various invented systems of the master.

Father Malbranche did not confine himself simply to the opinions of Des Cartes; while he did more than ample justice to their merit, he, with

With equal success, diffused his own particular notions.

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The greatest merit of Malbranche consisted in his address in deducing from an opinion every consequence, either interesting or specious, that imagination could possibly suggest, and in giving a profile view of the principles, in such a manner, that, on the side he leaves them open, it is impossible not to admit their propriety, at least so long as we keep our eyes fixed on that side only. We follow him with pleasure in the immense course of his ideas, which entertain and flatter curiosity, whilst they enliven and fascinate still more powerfully the mind of whoever is satisfied with contemplating objects, on that side alone on which they are displayed by Malbranche.

Those who do not admit the ideas of this philosopher, will have it, that, to escape their contagious influence at once, we have only to stop him at setting out, and oppose the first proposition he advances; that this is the safest and shortest method of refuting him, and of discovering clearly what we are to judge of his principles: they are chiefly confined to five or six, against which we must carefully be on our guard; for, if we once allow them, we shall be under the necessity of following him much further than we designed.

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The method he takes to insinuate his principles, is in reality calculated to deceive only those who are willing to be deceived. He fully displays the objections to which the opinion he refutes is liable; and whilst he endeavours to inspire us with contempt for it, he artfully exhibits his own in the most specious point of view; then, without further ceremony, he supposes it incontestable on all future occasions, never considering, nor pretending to consider, any objections that may, or should be made to it. In examining the subjects to which my plan naturally led me, as I have mentioned them more than once, it will be sufficient here to set down the most general principles of Malbranche, in order to refer the Reader to those parts of my work, wherein I have endeavoured to explain them. The following, in particular, are some of those principles.

I. *Vol I. Book I. Chap. X.* "The nature of
"the soul consists in actual thought."

Observation. I have shewn, in Part III. Chap. VI. the little proof we have that the soul always thinks.

II. *Book III. Part II. Chap. I.* "He defines
"ideas, the immediate objects of the mind,
"which represent things to it in so clear a man-
"ner,

“ner, that we can discover at one view whether
“such particular modifications belong to them.”

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Observ. I have related in a concise manner (Part III. Chap. VIII.) what can be said intelligible with respect to ideas; and in another work (*Principles of Reason*) I have explained what we are to understand by the object of an idea. Malbranche and his disciples were deceived by confounding the simple internal object of their ideas with the external object, as they are pleased to represent it, and which is by no means, in itself, what our ideas represent it; because we are unacquainted with the internal nature of things.

III. *Vol. I. Book III. Chap. II.* “Ideas are beings more real than all that we see in the universe.”

Observ. Ideas certainly have no more than an ideal reality; and those who do not immediately perceive what reason should judge of such realities, will not be convinced by all the reasoning in the world. The argument on which Malbranche founds his opinion is curious: Ideas, says he, are intelligible; they are not therefore non-entities, and consequently they are real beings. In like manner I may say, that motion, mobility, roundness, and every other modification imaginable, whether of minds or of bodies,

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are intelligible, and therefore that roundness is a real being.

IV. *Vol. I. Book III. Part II. Chap. IV.* "Our minds have an infinite number of ideas."

Observ. What does experience say? If our minds had an infinity of ideas, they would know an infinite number of objects. For my own part, I cannot say I find myself possessed of this happy extent of infinite knowledge. Were we even to consider chimerical ideas as true knowledge, their number would still be limited, and not infinite.

V. *Vol. I. Book III. p. 2, 6, 7.* "We cannot have a knowledge of the nature, essence, and modifications of a thing, but by a clear idea of the thing itself."

Observ. The Reader will find, in Chap. II. III. IV, and V. of the Second Part of this work, every necessary information for forming precise and proper ideas with regard to the essence of things: but if he wishes to avoid the trouble of seeking a refutation of Malbranche any where else but from himself, he need but consider that part of his Enquiry into Truth, (*Vol. II. Eclaircissement II.*) where he says, that *we have no clear idea either of the nature or the modifications of our souls*. If he has no such idea, how has he then declared, according to our first observation, that
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the nature of the soul consists in its actual thought? The contradiction is so glaring and obvious, that one must be either blind, or an enthusiastic follower of Malbranche, not to be struck with it.

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VI. *Vol. II. Book VI. Chap. I.* "Second causes are inefficacious: it is a contradiction, to say that God gives them any power, or constitutes them causes of any physical reality."

Observ. In Chap. XVII. and XVIII. of the Second Part of this treatise, in speaking of the ideas of *acting* and *action*, I have explained the question of occasional causes, in a manner which shews plainly that men have talked of acting and action without ever having any precise idea of either; and therefore the opinion of Malbranche concerns a first truth, where his proofs exactly form the state of the question; but by attacking him with his own words, he may be still more forcibly refuted. How, in fact, can he assert that a second cause, such as the human soul, has not the power of producing an act, if he acknowledges, on the other hand, that he has *no idea of the nature or modifications of the soul*? When he has learned to be consistent, we shall examine his ideas with closer attention.

VII. *Vol. I. Book III. Chap. II.* "The human mind has a very distinct idea of infinity."

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Observ. The equivocation that has puzzled so many on the subject of infinity, is clearly explained in Chap. XII. of the second part of this treatise.

VIII. *Vol. I. Book III. Part II.* "We see all things in God".

Observ. The many difficulties that have been started about this opinion, and the consequences thence deduced, are known to every body; but it appears to me, that the most natural reflection to be formed of the matter is, that we are as much perplexed to conceive in what manner we see God, and the things in God, as to comprehend how we see and know all other objects. Experience convinces of the fact; and the manner is incomprehensible.

IX. *Vol. I. Book III. Part I.* "Matter consists in extension."

Observ. This point has been discussed in Chapter I. of the Fourth Part of this treatise.

These difficulties, and others of a similar nature, are fully explained in a work that has for title, *Refutation of a Metaphysical Treatise*: it is printed in three volumes, by the Widow Maziere.

On the Metaphysical Work of LE CLERC.

THIS work may be known by the remarks made in different parts of my treatise. Le Clerc only copied the thoughts of Locke, at least in the greater part of his work. His design was laudable, in giving a compendium of a voluminous treatise, which contained many just and new reflections, with some others that were erroneous, and might be productive of very dangerous consequences.

Le Clerc, however, did not borrow from Locke his error with respect to the fancied prerogative of the sight over the organ of hearing, taken notice of Chap. XV. Part I. of this work.

It were to be wished that he had not followed Locke in his obscurities, and in those reflections which are as remote from the common sentiment of mankind, as from the principles of morality.

Other observations on this Writer may be found in the Remarks upon Locke.

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On the Logic of CROUZAS, Professor of Mathematics at LAUSANNE. Printed at Amsterdam in 1712, 2 vol. 12mo.

A R T I C L E I.

THE design of Crouzas was extensive: he proposed to include in his work the *principles, maxims, and observations, that might contribute to give the mind more capacity, strength, and facility, for the perception, discovery, and communication of truth, &c.* This design, which is rather considerable for a mere Logician, treats of the most important subjects of metaphysical researches; and hence we thought it worthy of examination.

II. He proposed to collect what had been most materially observed of the various operations of the human mind, by the different philosophers, who had attempted to investigate the subject: there is scarce any work of the kind, but that of Locke, to which he does not seem to have paid all the attention that was necessary.

III. He has made various new reflections, which would be highly valuable, had they been fully explained, An example of this may be seen

seen in *Chap. 1. Section 3. Part 1.* where he speaks of *clear* and *obscure*, *distinct* and *confused* ideas. He there plainly intimates, that at bottom there is no idea, considered in itself, which can be obscure; and that those commonly termed *obscure*, are no ideas, or but the ideas of a word under which no idea is conceived. He thus explains himself: We represent to ourselves a particular object under an idea vague, and not very distinct; and this is what is generally called an obscure idea, because it gives but an obscure knowledge of the object which we at the moment pretend to represent to ourselves. There is nevertheless no obscurity in the idea considered as to itself; for, however vague it may be supposed, it is not the less present to the mind, and consequently it is clear and not obscure in the mind: it is not a complete and distinct idea of the object we would fain represent to ourselves; but it is a complete and distinct idea of what is actually represented in the mind, so as to be totally distinguished from every other idea in the mind. Besides, as what is not actually in the mind, can be no idea, it cannot therefore be an obscure idea.

From this truth, here pointed out by Crouzas, a thousand discoveries might be deduced, to ascertain the true nature of ideas, in a more satisfactory manner than has been hitherto known.

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IV. Many other parts of this work furnish reflections equally acute and judicious.

A R T I C L E II.

V. But there are various reflections scattered through the work, which are not sufficiently explained. Besides, the subjects do not appear fully connected with the preceding matter, nor sufficiently supported with what immediately follows, so as to form a whole, whose parts are mutually dependent on each other.

VI. The neglect of elocution in some places is likewise an imperfection, that lessens the great perspicuity which is necessary, in abstracted matters, in order to make them clearly understood by those to whom they are explained.

VII. Although the knowledge and discovery of truth, on which the author pretends to ground his work, should be preceded by an exact notion of the word *truth*; he does not, however, distinguish the equivocation of which the term is susceptible. On other occasions of a similar nature, he supposes, as clear, terms that are full of ambiguity; so that he advances for incontestable, what would afford the fairest subject of controversy; and for true principles, the mere state of the questions. The first chapter, on the perceptions of the mind, furnishes examples to shew the true nature and spirit of the work.

VIII.

VIII. *Pag.* 8. " There are some perceptions
 " which are known and felt simply by them-
 " selves: there are others which, at the same time
 " that they are felt, help to make known to us
 " something different from ourselves. Grief and
 " desire belong to the first kind; the thought of
 " a tree, and of a circle, are of the second species.
 " The first are called sensations, and have them-
 " selves only for the object: the others have a dif-
 " ferent object from themselves; to these I give
 " the name of ideas.

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Observ. *There are perceptions that are known of themselves.* There is a perplexity in these words: perception does not properly know itself; it is but the action of the mind which knows, and it is the knowledge itself of the mind. Knowledge therefore does not know itself, no more than action can be properly said to act; it is the faculty of the soul called mind, which knows and acts: we cannot say it is *vision* sees, but the eye sees.

Again the author, by dividing the thoughts of the mind into *those that simply know themselves, and such as make known to us something different from ourselves*, supposes of course that we have thoughts that, independently of external objects, from which we receive impressions, make known to us things different from ourselves. This however appears false, or at least doubtful. It is less our minds that make known an object distinct from

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us, than the object itself distinct from us, which makes itself known to us through the channel of our senses. A man born blind has no knowledge of colours, because they have not first made themselves known to his mind. It is the same thing with respect to other sensible objects. The knowledge we have of them does not proceed from the nature of our thoughts themselves, but from the impresson of external objects on our souls, by sensations.

IX. *Pag.* 8. "Our sensations constitute our
"immediate happiness and misery.

Observ. The author defines sensation, *a perception which is simply felt of itself, without making known any extraneous object.* But, if this perception be not accompanied either by pleasure or displeasure, as would be the case of a reflection on the thought of a triangle, how should thought contribute to our happiness or misery? The object of this reflection would be simply in us; and consequently, according to the author's definition, it must be a *sensation*, and not an idea. Are we then happy or miserable by reflecting on the thought of a triangle? No, surely; unless, in the reflection on the thought of a triangle, some kind of pleasure or displeasure should occur. The author therefore, on this occasion, might have more clearly explained his opinion, or altered it entirely. What follows occasions new difficulties,

ties, by expressions which seem to mean something, but in fact say nothing.

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X. Pag. 8. *As it is not in our power to excite and repress those sensations, it is necessary, on that account, to borrow the assistance of objects.* What objects does the author mean? Are they external or internal objects? To what internal or external object must we have recourse, in order to restrain the sensation of a violent affliction which we are not able to conquer? Again, in what does this recourse *to objects* consist? What methods are to be used in order to accomplish it with efficacy? The more we endeavour to come at the author's meaning, the more it eludes our researches.

XI. Pag. 8. "The human mind draws its ideas, as it were, from its own stock."

Observ. As the author here contrasts *ideas* with *sensations*, he must mean, that, from our own stock, we rather derive what he calls ideas, than what he terms sensations; the idea of a circle, rather than a sentiment of desire: in which he appears to be mistaken, as a man may pass the first part of life without having any idea of a circle; but he is never without sentiment, or, to use the author's expressions, without the sensation of desire.

XII.

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XII. *Pag.* 8. "Man, as he likes, passes from
"one idea to another."

Observ. The author does not express himself justly here; for, by distinguishing *ideas* from *sensations*, as he has done, he attributes to ideas, in particular, what is no more applicable to them than to sensations. A mind occupied with the desire of being revenged on an enemy, can no more abandon the idea of the enemy, than the sensation of revenge. Every word the author has advanced on this occasion is full of perplexity or doubt: it is the same with what follows.

XIII. *Pag.* 8. "It was necessary it should be
"so; for, as the wisdom of man depends upon
"his ideas, it was fitting we should have it in
"our power to improve ourselves in knowledge
"and virtue."

Observ. Whence has the author discovered that the wisdom of man depends rather on what he calls *ideas*, than on what he terms *sensation*? Are there not numberless ideas of no manner of use to true wisdom, which consists in seeking and acquiring real happiness? On the other hand, the sensations he mentions, such as thirst, hunger, pain, sorrow, and desire, are all interesting to our happiness; so that it would be of much more important advantage to our wisdom and happiness, that we were masters of our sensations than of our
ideas,

ideas, supposing we could have sensations without ideas, as Crouzas pretends, by opposing sensations to ideas.

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XIV. *Pag. 8.* "This is the reason why words produce ideas, and not sensations."

Observ. These words follow the preceding quotation from the author, in immediate succession, although we cannot perceive the connection or consequence of either the one, or the other; nor do we more clearly discern the meaning of what follows next.

XV. "But although a word serves to indicate a certain sensation, we in vain pronounce it; the sound of the word does not give the soul the power of producing a sensation that depends on external objects, and which it has pleased the Author of Nature to affix to their impressions."

Observ. Does a word rather give power to the soul to produce an idea, than power to produce a sensation? When we say that a word produces ideas, it is saying that words, which are the signs of objects, occasion the soul to recollect the idea of those objects. Now, in this sense, a word produces a sensation, as well as an idea, as it occasions the soul to perceive a sensation, as well as an idea.

XVI.

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XVI. *Pag. 9. A sensation depends upon objects.*

The author has said, in the preceding page, that sensations have themselves alone for objects. How are all those objects to be conceived and explained?

Pag. 9. "When we are at a loss to express our thoughts, and cannot clearly convey them, there is some probability that we have confined ourselves to sensations, instead of ideas."

Observ. What does he mean by saying, *we confine ourselves to sensations instead of ideas*? Is this intelligible? Besides, when we cannot succeed in expressing our thoughts, this does not arise more from sensations than ideas; we may be as much puzzled to express ideas as sensations: and this difficulty is only occasioned by two causes; either from our ignorance of the language in which we attempt to explain ourselves, or from the sterility of the language itself, which does not furnish expressions sufficient to communicate what we have in our minds. This is clear, and more easily understood than saying, it is because *we have confined ourselves to sensations, instead of ideas.*

XVII. *Pag. 11.* "When we think, as the objects act upon the organs of our body, the ideas

“ ideas that excite it, immediately belong to the REMARKS.
 “ faculty of the senses.”

Observ. What is the reason the author here calls the senses the organs of the body? The body is its own organ: the senses are the organs of the soul, as being the instruments by whose assistance the soul perceives the objects distinct from herself. The remainder of the last-quoted passage is so unintelligible, that it is better to ascribe the ambiguity to the errors of the press, than to the author's expressions.

Our imagination, in order to satisfy the desire we have of knowing the nature of thought, presents us with the idea of a certain kind of fire, &c. I know not what sort of imagination represents thought as a fire. We indeed sometimes compare it metaphorically to fire; and this has given rise to those expressions, *fire of imagination*, or *thoughts full of fire*: but I cannot thence persuade myself that a thought may be represented as a fire.

XVIII. *Pag.* 13. “ Numbers are very distinctly
 “ known.”

Observ. The proposition taken in a general sense, as it is here set forth, is very false: numbers multiplied to a great degree, such as millions of myriads, are not distinctly known but in the same manner as geometrical demonstrations; that is, a mind that studies to know them one after ano-

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ther, and that is capable of fully retaining their relation, will know them very distinctly. But what does this idea of numbers imply, that is not common to all other ideas?

XIX. The author adds, "that the images, "with which imagination accompanies those "ideas, are not uniform; the Latins, Greeks, "and Hebrews, when they think of a hundred, "think of the same number; but their images are "different, as C. and 100."

Observ. The author, on this occasion, appears to confound written characters, which are nothing but arbitrary signs formed differently, according to the fancy of various nations, for the purpose of representing numbers, with the natural images of the idea of numbers.

XX. *Pag.* 14. "We should do all in our "power to banish the idea of body, and endeavour to think as we should if there were no "body."

Observ. How should I think, if there were no body? This I should first learn, before I was exhorted to think as if there had been none; but it is what I shall never be able to learn, because we have no thought, nor knowledge, but by the use of the senses, which form a part of the body.

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These reflections, which are beyond the natural reach of our understanding, are the foundation of the maxims of certain philosophers, whom people sometimes fancy they understand, and who flatter themselves that they are understood; but their opinion is not the real matter of fact.

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On the Logic of REGIS, with respect to Metaphysical Principles.

[*This work, as the Author hints, having been formed on the plan of others, which have been taken notice of, we shall pass over such parts as might expose us to the necessity of repetitions.*]

ARTICLE I.

THE method of Regis is praise-worthy: he has endeavoured to give precepts independently of suppositions. As these are generally in some degree arbitrary, they consequently form only destructive principles.

II. He justly observes in what manner all ideas might be reduced under more proper heads than the ten Categories of Aristotle.

III. On the chapter of Universal Ideas he very properly exposes the inutility of diffusive questions, which are sometimes treated on this subject;

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ject: he comprises what can be rationally said of the matter, within the compass of three pages; and it might, if necessary, be reduced to three words, as follows: Among ideas more or less common, subordinate to each other, that which is most common is called *genus*, with respect to what is less so, which is denominated *species*, or *kind*; that the latter is also termed *immediate species* or *kind*, when it no longer has any common idea, but only particular ideas subordinate to it.

IV. He judiciously observes, that every negative proposition should be reduced to a positive idea, without which there could be no connexion between two propositions, one whereof should be negative. This I have taken notice of on another occasion; and it is the principle by which all syllogisms are reduced under one rule.

ARTICLE II.

V. This work is rather too concise: the author's ideas are not sufficiently explained.

VI. *Preface.* The author says, that *he has made no discoveries in Logic, because it is confined within certain limits which cannot be passed.* This conclusion is not just: discoveries may be made within the bounds of Logic, and there were discoveries to be made at the time he wrote,

VII. The plan the author sets out upon, of not reasoning on suppositions, he directly contradicts

tradicts by the following assertion: *The soul has, at most, only the power of determining the motions of the body; and experience shows that they do not proceed from it.* This, I say, is a supposition; and I do not know but the supposition is in itself contradictory; for, if the soul has the power of determining the motions of the body, by that very rule it has the power of acting upon the body. Vide Chap. XVIII. Part II. of this Treatise.

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VIII. Pag. III. "It is likewise an ill-founded and dangerous supposition, to include the idea of extension in the list of ideas of substance." (Vide the latter end of Chap. I. Part IV.) Our Author seems confused when he afterwards says, that *square or triangular figures are modes of extension, because they cannot exist without extension.* We may, with equal reason, tell him that extension is a mode of body, because it cannot exist separate from an extended body.

IX. Pag. 8. "The arbitrary idea of a triangle represents all triangles."

Remark. The reflection is not just: the arbitrary idea indeed represents what is common to all triangles; but every triangle has, in particular, real distinctions, which cannot be represented by an arbitrary and general idea.



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X. "If," says the Author, "I apply myself to consider that extension exists in itself, the idea I form will represent therein, not only the body, but also the mind." This proposition, and the consequence which the Author seems inclined to deduce from it, are so strange, that it is sufficient to repeat them, without there being any necessity for analysing their dangerous absurdities.

XI. *Pag. 4.* The Author defines *method* in these terms—*The art of properly directing reason in the pursuit of truth.* But, in giving *method* for a part of logic, how can he suppose a part of Logic to have the same function as the totality of Logic itself, the end of which is to direct Reason in her researches after truth? It would have been proper to have distinguished in what, and how, a part differs from the whole, and the whole from a part.

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